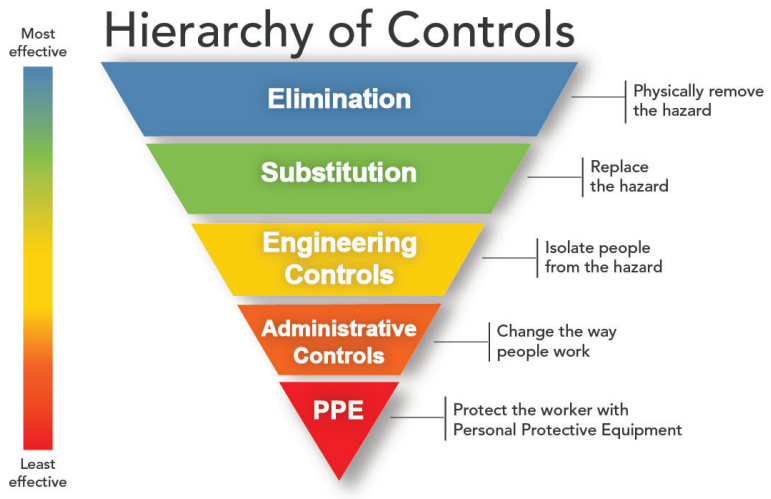
Protecting High-Risk Individuals

Recommendations for the Workplace

For the purposes of these recommendations, high-risk individuals would include all people in the workforce who meet any of the following criteria as outlined in CDC guidelines and the Utah Leads Together 2.0 Plan. If you have questions about these risk factors or other conditions, please consult with your personal doctor.

High-Risk Individuals:

- ☑ People aged 65 years and older.
- ☑ People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
- ☑ People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- ☑ People who have serious heart conditions.
- ☑ People who are immunocompromised including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- ☑ People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] >40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease.
- ☑ People who are pregnant should be monitored since they are known to be at risk with severe viral illness, however, to date data on COVID-19 has not shown increased risk.



When controlling exposure to health and safety risks, best practice emphasizes the Hierarchy of Controls as outlined by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Note that personal protective equipment (PPE) is at the bottom of the hierarchy. This means that all other methods of controlling exposure to safety and health hazards should be considered before relying on PPE.

According to the hierarchy of controls, the best possible protection for all, including high-risk individuals, is to eliminate the hazard. In the case of COVID-19 and high-risk individuals, the hazard is very difficult to completely remove. The best protection for high-risk individuals may be to exclude them from exposure to the hazard.

[1] Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html)
[2] Utah Leads Together 2.0 (https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Governor/UtahLeads%20April2020%20v20%20(2).pdf)
[3] Hierarchy of Controls, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Center for Disease Control and Prevention, (https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html)

This would exclude many from the workforce and leave them without income to provide the necessities of life, making it necessary to provide social support systems such as unemployment benefits for those who qualify as high-risk until a vaccine or treatment alternatives are developed. We recognize this may not be economically feasible and may require additional legislation. When such measures are not feasible, we recommend implementing all other methods in the hierarchy of controls.

General Recommendations for All Workplaces

The following recommendations apply to protect high-risk employees while returning to work duties. This list is not exhaustive and does not contain every possible recommendation for every workplace.

	Protective Measures Employers Should Implement for ALL Employees
☐	Protect high-risk employees, ideally keeping them working from home to the extent feasible.
☐	All individuals should wear masks or cloth face coverings in public spaces to help control the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a cloth face covering is intended to help protect others in the event the wearer is an asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carrier and spreader of COVID-19.
☐	Maintain physical distancing between co-workers and customers (ideally 6+ feet).
☐	Encourage the use of the Healthy Together app.
☐	Wear disposable gloves when interacting with the public, taking payments, using shared work space or equipment, or any other time the employer feels it is necessary.
☐	Consider screening of both symptomatic and asymptomatic workers, including temperature screening and symptom monitoring.
☐	Where possible, use floor markings spaced six feet apart or physical barriers such as plexiglass to reduce exposure.
☐	Use local exhaust ventilation or increase air exchanges in the HVAC system to dilute the air (including HEPA filters in the HVAC system).
☐	Where possible, use portable air purification systems for small work areas.
☐	Regularly sanitize workspace, including frequent and high-contact areas.
☐	Move high-risk employees to areas with lower potential COVID-19 exposures, such as non-customer facing and limit co-worker interactions.
☐	High-risk employees should avoid handling cash. When possible, use contactless payment options. This includes tips and gratuities.
☐	Common employee areas (restrooms, breakroom, kitchen, etc.) should be cleaned regularly. Designate areas only to be used by high-risk employees.
☐	Where possible, high-risk individuals should not ride in an elevator with others.
☐	Train all employees on COVID-19 exposure risks and prevention. Training should include high-risk factors as defined above and by CDC.

IDENTIFY YOUR HIGH-RISK EMPLOYEES: Start by determining if any of your employees meet one or more of the criteria below.	
☐	65 years and older.
☐	People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
☐	People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
☐	People who have serious heart conditions.
☐	People who are immunocompromised including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
☐	People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] ≥40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease.
☐	People who are pregnant should be monitored since they are known to be at risk with severe viral illness, however, to date data on COVID-19 has not shown increased risk.

NOTE: Elimination of the hazard, substitution of the hazard, engineering controls and administrative controls are preferred over using PPE to protect against any health and safety hazard. Go down the list and determine if employees can perform their jobs while taking any of the additional precautions listed below.

Industry Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations are in addition to those outlined in the Phased Guidelines for the General Public and Businesses associated with the Utah Leads Together 2.0 program. Protective measures for high-risk individuals should be applied at every risk level (red, orange, yellow and green) until a vaccine or effective treatment options are available. This list of recommendations are not an exhaustive list and each specific industry will have its own criteria for keeping high-risk employees safe.

Restaurants	
☐	Use disposable plates, cutlery, cups, etc. to the extent possible.
☐	Electronic or disposable menus should be used. If this is not feasible, consider laminating menus and disinfecting between each use.
☐	Clean and disinfect chairs and tables after each customer use.
☐	Assign high-risk employees to low exposure areas, such as working in non-customer facing areas as much as possible.
☐	Wear protective masks while in the restaurant and kitchen.
☐	Designate non high-risk employees to bus tables.
☐	Housekeeping in public areas should be left to low-risk employees.

[4] Phased Guidelines for the General Public and Businesses To Maximize Public Health and Economic Reactivation, (https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Governor/20200420%20Phased%20Guidelines.pdf)

Retail	
☐	Assign low-risk employees to cashiering and other customer-facing work.
☐	Stocking by high-risk individuals should be done when public is not present.
☐	Returns that cannot be disinfected should be handled by low-risk employees.
☐	Clothing from dressing rooms should be restocked by low-risk employees.
☐	Alternate work hours may be required to accommodate high-risk employees.
☐	Housekeeping in public areas should be left to low-risk employees.

Hospitality	
☐	Eliminate handling of luggage and other customer items by high-risk employees.
☐	Valet services should be provided by low-risk employees if possible.
☐	Room keys should be sanitized between employee and patron usage.
☐	Limit number of individuals in an elevator based on size of elevator to allow for social distancing. High-risk individuals should avoid riding in an elevator with others.
☐	Housekeeping in public areas should be assigned to low-risk employees.

Events and Entertainment	
☐	High-risk employees should wear protective masks and gloves.
☐	Encourage contactless ticket verification. Allow patrons to scan tickets.
☐	Live theatres, performances, athletic events, and concerts should provide social distancing between the performers/support staff and the audience.

Personal Services (hair, tattoo, nail salons)	
☐	Use physical barriers where possible.
☐	All employees should use aprons, gloves, eye, and face protection in addition to protective masks.

Home Repair	
☐	Disinfect company vehicles regularly. If driving with a co-worker, protective masks should be worn while in vehicle.
☐	Where the possibility of contamination exists, wear a protective covering (for example, Tyvek or disposable smock).

Gym	
☐	Locker room and gym housekeeping should be performed by low-risk employees.
☐	Employees should avoid using a public water fountain.
☐	Disinfect shared office equipment.
☐	Towel service and other laundry should be handled by low-risk employees.

Construction	
☐	Regularly sanitize portable restrooms.
☐	Maintain physical distance as much as possible on a construction jobsite.
☐	Where not possible use protective face mask.

Manufacturing	
☐	Maintain physical distance as much as possible.
☐	Install physical barriers when physical distancing is not possible.
☐	High-risk employees should always wear protective masks while working.
☐	Wear gloves while assembling parts.

Day Care	
☐	High-risk employees should always wear gloves and protective masks.
☐	High-risk employees should minimize direct contact with children as much as possible. Consider assigning them to other tasks such as food preparation, reading from a distance, cleaning, etc.
☐	Use HEPA filtered vacuum for cleaning.

Suggested Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is at the bottom of the hierarchy of controls in controlling exposure to health and safety hazards. Elimination of the hazard, substitution of the hazard, engineering controls and administrative controls are preferred over using PPE to protect against health and safety hazards. Use of N-95 masks is essential for health care workers, first responders and other front line workers, thus adequacy of the supply of N-95 masks for these workers should be considered before using them for other workers.

- ☑ N-95 masks may be used to the extent feasible for all high-risk employees. Other similar protective masks such as KN-95, or surgical masks may be used if N-95 masks are not available.
- ☑ Surgical masks and cloth face coverings provide less protection to the wearer than N-95 and KN-95 masks.
- ☑ Provide training to employees using PPE in accordance with OSHA regulations.
- ☑ Use eye and face protection to limit droplet spread while in close contact.
- ☑ Gloves may be worn and training should be provided. Hands should be washed upon glove removal.
- ☑ In some situations, higher levels of PPE may be necessary (protective smock, gloves, face shield, etc.).
- ☑ Perform frequent hand washing and use hand sanitizers.
- ☑ Use signage to encourage public usage of face masks prior to entering a place of business.

[5] Comparison of FFP2, KN95, and N95 and Other Filtering Facepiece Respirator Classes, 3M Technical Bulletin, Revision 2, January, 2020 (https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/1791500O/comparison-ffp2-kn95-n95-filtering-facepiece-respirator-classes-tb.pdf)