

Planning and Natural Resources Department
Worksite Specific Plan
Updated per June 18, 2020
State Guidance on Face Coverings

Department: Planning and Natural Resources Department

Contact(s): Teresa Pickens - (661) 862-8804, (661) 204-1710 (cell)

Tpickens@kerncounty.com

Worksite Location(s): Public Services Building, 2700 M Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301

Worksite Plan Overview

The Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department has developed the following Worksite Specific Plan. As this department shares the “Public Services Building” with multiple County agencies and tenants, the plan was prepared in consultation with the Kern County Public Works Department, the Kern County Environmental Health Department, Kern Medical, Kern Economic Development Corporation and the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District.

In short, due to ongoing and current construction operations and remodeling of the first floor atrium, it is not possible for this department and the other departments within this building to return to normal while continuing to protect both the employees and general public who may come to the office. Therefore, the Public Services Building will remain closed to the public in general. In-person interaction between the public and staff will be primarily through an appointment only basis. Whenever possible, requested meetings, interactions, etc. will be conducted virtually or through phone conferences. It is not anticipated that this procedure will result in any backlog of application processing or providing service to the public in general.

A drop box has been established in the front of the building for customers wishing to drop off application(s) and other planning related materials. Additionally, Staff will encourage the submittal of future applications through email and other electronic means. Current mail systems has not been greatly impacted and members of the public can continue to provide hard copy materials through mail if desired.

In the case that a customer must meet with a member of the Planning Staff, a dedicated large conference room has been established on the west side of the building to accommodate these meeting requests. This conference room is large enough to allow for appropriate social distancing requirements. Participants will be able to enter the building from the side door and go directly into the conference room, thus eliminating exposure of other employees by walking members of the public in any common use areas. The conference room shall be cleaned after each use, utilizing department provided cleaning supplies, by individuals (Staff) who used the room. Gloves and masks will be provided to Staff for use during those interactions, along with touchless temperature reader to screen members of the public. The Department will encourage meeting members of the public outside the office to collect items, if possible.

All Planning Staff that have the ability to work from home will be allowed to do so with the exception of three (3) units, Counter Operations, Fiscal Support and Word Processing. It has been determined that within these units, there will always need to be minimal Staff within the office. To address these staffing needs, employees within those units will participate in a rotating schedule consisting of working from home some days of the week and working within the office on other days. This staggered approach to staffing will ensure appropriate social distancing requirements among these units that don't have dedicated offices or work spaces separate from their colleagues. The department has one individual working in Reception who cannot work from home. The department has coordinated with other departments in the building to address the health and safety of reception staff, including rearranging workstations to ensure 6 feet distancing and providing masks and sanitizer for the reception staff.

Public Hearings

All Director's Hearings (Public Meeting) will be conducted virtually, utilizing "Go To Meetings." This will allow for both members of the public and other department staff to participate in these public hearings from their home or office. Planning Commission Hearings will be conducting utilizing the same virtual process utilized by the Board of Supervisors.

The following detailed measures are being implemented to address the six (6) steps for risk assessment outlined by the County Administrative Office.

A. Individual Control Measures and Screening

Provide a detailed explanation of what your Department is doing with regard to the following:

Temperature and/or Symptom Screening

The department is located in the PSB building where Kern Medical has an office and the staff of Kern Medical will be conducting non-contact temperature reading and symptom screening for all staff who are entering the building to work from 6:30am to 9:00am. All Planning Staff working within the office will be required to have their temperature checked before reporting to their designated work site.

Any staff recording a temperature reading of 100.4 or higher and/or responding yes to any of the symptom screening questions will be directed to leave the building and not return until their temperature reading is below 100.4 for 72 hours and/or all symptoms are gone.

Any Planning Staff that will be working in the office and arrives to work after 9:00am will participate in a self-check, with a witness, utilizing temperature reading devices purchased by the Department.

As we are encouraging employees to work from home, any staff person who is arriving at the building simply to pick up work papers from their desk will not be required to self-check. These visits should last no more than ten (10) minutes and should not involve the employee visiting

other employees or congregating within any common areas. These employees will be encouraged to wear face coverings.

Face Coverings

The Department has secured a supply of face masks/coverings for employees who are working in office to use. The staff will be required to wear this protective face covering anytime they are not at their individual workstations, whether that is in the elevators, the stairwells, or delivering/retrieving files and paperwork from common areas and the parking areas. The department has a limited number of masks but the supply should suffice for the short term as the majority of staff will be working remotely.

B. Protecting High-Risk Employees

Identifying High-Risk Employees The department has identified the high risk employees based on age and on reported underlying health conditions/requested accommodations.

1. The Department has requested that each employee contact Teresa Pickens to request any accommodations needed due to medically required quarantine for themselves or family members, outstanding child care issues or any other issues that hinder their ability to work either in the office or in some cases, remotely.
2. If any employee believes there has been a change in status if they or a member of their household becomes high-risk, they are instructed to report that to Teresa Pickens for further workplace accommodations or placement on leave.
3. Currently the department has 4 employees who have reported health conditions requiring them to work remotely and 3 employees who will be on leave effective May 18 due to lack of child care.

Protecting High-Risk Employees

All employees who have presented with a health condition or who are in an age-related high risk group will be working remotely for the foreseeable future. There has been no incidents in which an accommodation has not been made for staff reporting a need to work remotely or take leave for medical/child care reasons. That practice will continue to the extent possible as employees report high risk situations or request accommodations.

C. Physical Distancing

Provide a detailed explanation of what your Department is doing with regard to the following:

Telework Options

1. The department has identified staffing in four categories: fully in office (3), dual in office/remote staffing, fully remote staffing (to include any staff who has been identified

as high-risk or requesting accommodation), and staff who will rotate into and out of in office work with other staff.

2. The Microsoft TEAMS program is utilized with daily check-ins for staff in each division of the department. Conference calls and go to meetings are also utilized to continue to engage the staff in meetings involving the public and/or applicants and consultants.
3. Three (3) units have been identified that require minimal Staff within the office to ensure continued operations. These units will participate in a rotating schedule to ensure social distancing requirements.
4. Department has requested VPN access for all but 6 staff members and that has been completed by ITS accordingly. ITS has also set up the Conference Room 1C for video conferencing for our Applicant/Consultant kickoff meetings as well as Director Hearings, all of which will be conducted virtually for the foreseeable future.
5. Of the 65 employees of the department, only 6 will not have VPN access as of May 18, 2020. Of those, 3 are on Emergency Paid Leave, due to child care, and three are required to be in office daily due to work requirements.

Scheduling Adjustments

1. The Planning and Natural Resources Department will be returning to the 9/80 Flex Schedules in place prior to March 17, 2020. The majority of our staff will working remotely via VPN, so on-site staffing will be at a minimum.
2. All employees (65) of the Planning and Natural Resources Department will be operating under some form of altered schedule, with the exception of the receptionist, who serves as receptionist for entire PSB building.
3. Three (3) employees are on Emergency Paid Leave due to lack of child care arrangements for at least the next 2 weeks.
4. Department Guidelines for remote work:
 - a. Employee must request and install a VPN for access to drives and files.
 - b. Employee is responsible for pick up/return of all department files/documents needed for remote work completion.
 - c. All staff working remotely must be available and prepared to participate in a 9:00 AM daily call with supervisor and other staff.
 - d. If a staff member (excepting those identified as high risk or presenting a health condition) wishes to work onsite, they may do so, provided they submit to required temperature/symptom screening.

Workstation Adjustments

1. All workstations and cubicles have been measured to ensure there is the required 6 feet of distancing between workstations. Staff are required to clean/sanitize their individual work stations when they report for work. No sharing of cubicle/work space is allowed.

Other Physical Distancing Strategies

1. *What has your Department done to restrict/limit access to common areas (i.e., break rooms, lunch rooms, etc.)?*

Employees have been instructed to not congregate in the common areas and the first floor break room is shut off from staff access due to the ongoing lobby remodel. Staff have been instructed to only use elevators with three (3) or fewer riders.

2. *What has your Department done to ensure meetings meet 6 feet distancing requirements?*

All meeting rooms have been marked for the required 6 feet of social distancing and extra chairs removed for all Planning meeting and conference rooms.

3. *What large gatherings has your Department temporarily postponed and the steps your Department is taking to hold those virtually in the future?*

All meetings have been transitioned to virtual meetings, utilizing Go To Meetings, Teams meetings and conference calls. No in person meetings will be schedule for the foreseeable future.

4. *What steps has your Department done with respect to the following?*

a. *Establish directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic-*

Traffic has already been rerouted due to the Lobby construction and those barriers will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

b. *Designate separate routes for entry and exit into office spaces-*

Lobby construction has dictated alternate paths and entrances/access and those will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

c. *Limit the number of individuals riding in an elevator-*

Three (3) or fewer people are allowed on an elevator car, with signage located at the elevators to notify staff of this.

d. *Staggering employee breaks-*

Most staff will be working remotely, but flex scheduling will be reinstituted.

e. *Discontinue non-essential travel-*

No travel is approved for the foreseeable future

f. *Direct guests to meeting rooms to avoid congregation in lobbies;-*

Lobby is under construction and the building is closed to public. In the case that a

customer must meet with a member of the Planning Staff, a dedicated large conference room has been established on the west side of the building to accommodate these meeting requests. This conference room is large enough to allow for appropriate social distancing requirements. Participants will be able to enter the building from the side door and go directly into the conference room, thus eliminating exposure of other employees by walking members of the public in any common use areas.

g. Utilize virtual tools or bulletin boards to hand-off information between staff-

Weekly emails to staff are ongoing to provide information as it is updated. Teams department meetings will continue for the foreseeable future.

D. Additional Measures to Limit Exposure to the Public

The Public Services Building is going to be closed to members of the public for the foreseeable future, in part due to the ongoing lobby construction. The public has been notified via the Planning website and voicemail/email messages to contact staff and schedule a time for drop off of application and payment for permits. The public will be met in the west side door of the building and if entry is requested, they will be meeting with staff in the 1C conference room which is set up for social distancing and marked off appropriately. In addition, staff who meet with anyone from public in that conference room is required to sanitize it immediately following the meeting. Cleaning agents, such as disinfecting wipes and spray, and gloves are provided and located in that conference room.

E. Ensuring a Clean and Hygienic Work Environment

Provide a detailed explanation of what your Department is doing with regard to the following:

1. What is your Department's plan for maintaining cleanliness in the worksite?

Daily cleaning/sanitizing of the workstation for staff working in the office will be required. General Services will be responsible for the cleaning of common areas and rest rooms. The conference room used for staff to meet any public that may need to speak with them will be sanitized by that staff person immediately after the meeting has concluded.

2. Describe the adequacy of your Department's cleaning supplies, including those that have been procured for employees reporting to the worksite?

The staff has secured a limited supply of cleaning agents, wipes and sprays and also hand sanitizer for staff use. Depending upon the need, these most likely will not be sufficient for the long term but we are investigating other sources of these supplies now.

3. *Do employees have access to necessary products for sanitization (i.e. hand sanitizer, soap)? Are employees allowed extra time for handwashing?*

There is a limited supply but with the majority of staff working remotely, the supply will be sufficient for the short term. We are exploring other avenues of security these types of supplies. Employees have been instructed to take any necessary time needed to adequately wash their hands.

4. *Have employees been supplied with disinfectant/cleaner for their workstations? Have employees been given extra time to disinfect/clean their workstation at the start and end of their shift and as needed?*

The department does not have an adequate supply for the entire staff but at this time we do not anticipate full staff needing disinfectant/cleaner at their workstation, due to the majority of staff working remotely. The department is exploring avenues to secure adequate supplies for June 1, 2020 timeframe.

5. *Has hand sanitizer been made available to members of the public?*

No, except for those coming to 1C, which is supplied with hand sanitizer and protective face covering, if needed. Whenever someone is met in the 1C conference room by staff, that staff is responsible for cleaning the conference after the meeting with sanitizer provided.

6. *Have employees been asked to bring their own face coverings or have disposable face coverings been provided to employees?*

Yes, they are asked to bring their own but the department does have a limited supply on hand for staff. However, most staff will be working remotely.

7. *Will members of the public be refused entry without a face covering or will disposable face coverings be made available to visitors?*

The public is not being allowed into the Public Services Building with rare exceptions and those will be met at the West Side entrance and directed to one location, the 1C Conference room, which will have masks and sanitizing supplies provided.

F. Training and Communication of Managers/Supervisors/Employees

Provide a detailed explanation of what your Department is doing with regard to the following:

1. *What is your Department's plan to communicate and train all staff on your Worksite Specific Plan and the Guidelines for Safely Returning Kern County to Work?*

The department has scheduled a department-wide staff meeting via the Teams application for Thursday, May 14 to review all the points contained in this plan. Additionally, the Assistant Director and Administrative Services Officer will be meeting staff of each division of the department via teams to outline the remote work guidelines and safety guidelines. The plan will also be emailed to each employee of the department prior to employees returning to work.

2. *How have you communicated the County's goals in protecting employees and the public from infection to managers and supervisors?*

The County's goals and guidelines for protecting employees, their families and the public have been provided to all staff in previous department wide calls in April and early May, and in weekly emails to all staff.

3. *How have you trained supervisors to isolate and send home any employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?*

Yes, since March 17, there has been communications with staff and supervisors on symptoms and requirements to report and remove from workplace any staff exhibiting symptoms.

4. *Have all staff been provided with the Guidelines for Safely Returning Kern County to Work?*

The Guidelines and the Department specific plan will be emailed to all staff, upon approval of the plan by HR. These items have been discussed in previous department-wide Teams call Thursday, May 7 and will also be covered again in Teams call on Thursday, May 14.

5. *What is your Department's process for receiving employee inquiries about deficiencies in the implementation of your Worksite Specific Plan?*

Staff have been encouraged to email the Assistant Director and Administrative Services Officer with any questions, concerns, or need to self-report health concerns that may require accommodations during the all department wide Teams calls, and in emails sent to staff bi-weekly. Those concerns and requests are reviewed by management and potential changes to plan will be considered.