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What your parish can do now to begin preparing for the gradual, phased return to operations

As outlined by the Vicar General, the Re-opening Working Committee and Pandemic Response Team are continuing to develop guidance and directives for the eventual, phased in reopening of our parish offices and churches. That planning and guidance will be more fully developed and distributed as we receive additional information and the details within the Governor's "four-phase" plan.

While there is hope that Massachusetts may be statistically ready to enter Phase 1, the "Start" phase after the 18th, in the short term, there will be no immediate change from our current operations and operational model for our parish offices. We can, however, take advantage of this time to take steps to plan and prepare for the eventual and gradual, phased in return to parish office operations. For example, identifying the safest pedestrian or visitor traffic flow paths that reduce exposure to those individuals and staff, with signage and tape markers on the floor.

There will be, throughout all phases of the re-opening process, certain requirements that the Governor's office has put forth as standards that apply to all employers. These standards will require planning considerations, preparation steps and protocols to ensure compliance. The requirements include:

- a. **All employees will be required to wear masks at all times while on the premises.** It is recommended that the parish require that staff put on the mask when exiting their vehicle and keep the mask on until they are back in the vehicle. Employees should also bring in their own mask, but the parish should be prepared to have masks available.
- b. **Anyone entering the parish office will have their temperature checked.** This can be done via a no-touch thermometer. The Facilities Department has ordered, and will distribute, one no-touch thermometer for each parish.
- c. **Staff who are ill, are COVID-19 symptomatic, or display a temperature while on the premises, need to be asked to immediately go home or taken to an isolation area until they are able to be transported home. Cleaning and disinfecting must be performed.** The parish should consider an appropriate room on the premises to be used as an isolation area in the event there is a delay in a sick staff member's transport home.
- d. **All employees will be expected to continue to practice six feet social distancing protocol.** It is recommended that staff avoid using a co-worker's phone, keyboards or other equipment.

- e. Employees will be expected to exercise proper personal hygiene with frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.**
- f. Signage must be provided reminding staff of the need for social distancing.**
- g. There must be regular sanitization of high touch areas of the offices, such as workstations, equipment, doorknobs and restrooms.**

In addition, parishes should prepare to continue, to the extent possible, to operate in a work from home structure throughout the first three phases and beyond. Keep in mind as you prepare, that those individuals in the vulnerable category, including staff and volunteers, are advised to continue to stay at home throughout the first two phases.

As noted above, additional guidance for parish operations, specific to the four phases of the Governor's plan, will be provided as we all receive more detail and timing information. In the interim, please feel free contact the Office of Risk Management or the Response Team at corona@rcab.org should you have any questions.