

Frequently Asked Questions by Snohomish County Business Owners

I own a dance studio/gymnastics facility. Can I offer private lessons if the total number of people in the facility doesn't exceed 50 and I ensure proper cleaning, sanitizing and social distancing?

No. The [emergency order issued by the Snohomish Health District Officer](#) states "also prohibited are the operation of public venues in which people congregate for entertainment, social or recreational purposes, including but not limited to bowling alleys, gymnasiums, fitness centers, athletic clubs, card rooms, barbershops and hair/nail salons, tattoo parlors, pool halls, and other similar venues." This includes dance studios and gymnastics facilities, and of any size.

I own a small shop. Could I let in a certain number of people in order to let people into the store? Can I have customers sign-up online for an appointment to "shop" if the facility doesn't exceed 50 and I ensure proper cleaning, sanitizing and social distancing?

At this time, retail businesses **may operate** if they meet all requirements within the order AND designate an employee to be responsible for implementing social distancing and sanitation measures. Food and beverages served on site are not allowed.

Requirements from the order are:

- Older adults and individuals with underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COVID-19 are encouraged not to attend (including employees)
- Social distancing requirements must be met (i.e., people staying 6 feet from each other, aside from momentary and minimal contact at closer distances only when absolutely necessary)
- Employees must be screened for coronavirus symptoms each day and excluded if symptomatic
- Proper hand hygiene and sanitation must be readily available to all guests and employees
- Environmental cleaning guidelines from the CDC must be followed, including cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces daily or more frequently

Please see the [emergency order issued by the Snohomish Health District Officer](#) for additional details.

What exactly does "screening your employees" entail? Customers?

Employees are screened for coronavirus symptoms each day and excluded if symptomatic. Symptoms could include sore throat, cough, shortness of breath or fever.

In most settings, employers can rely on employees self-reporting. They should set and emphasize the expectation that employees take their temperatures at home and not come to work if they have a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher, or if they have any symptoms of respiratory illness, including cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing. If an employee is noticeably ill at work, they need to go home and stay away from others. Ill employees should not return to work until 7 days after symptom onset or 72 hours after symptoms resolve, **whichever is longer**.

Businesses should also actively encourage customers or guests who are ill not to enter. They can do so through posting signs or posters (some are available for download at www.snohd.org/501/Posters-for-Download), verbally informing customers of the expectation, sharing messaging online, etc.

For employers in health care settings, they should consider measuring employee temperatures and assessing symptoms on-site prior to the start of work, as well.

Is there any financial assistance for small businesses available from the state?

Yes. Visit Governor Jay Inslee's webpage for information:

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-resources-businesses-and-workers>. The page includes information on financial assistance, export assistance, employer and worker assistance, and insurance assistance.

I've heard that the Small Business Administration may have short-term loans for business owners. How do I apply? What is the criteria?

The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) may be able to provide assistance through the Economic Injury Disaster Loans program to businesses that have suffered substantial economic injury in an eligible disaster area. Congress approved up to \$7 billion in low-interest disaster loans specifically to assist small businesses impacted by COVID-19. These loans can help small businesses meet financial obligations and cover operating expenses. Visit: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>

Aside from short-term, low interest loans for businesses, are there other resources available? Grants? Tax credits?

The Washington State Department of Revenue (DOR) can work with impacted companies that request an extension on tax filing. Contact DOR at 360.705.6705.

The Washington State Department of Commerce's Export Assistance Team division can help companies identify alternative markets and provide firms with STEP Vouchers to defray the costs of trade show or trade mission fees, airfare, interpreter and translation services, business matchmaking, export training programs and more. Visit: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/promoting-washington-state/export-assistance> or contact the Export Assistance team at 206.256.6100.

The SBA's Export Working Capital Program can help small businesses obtain working capital advances from lenders on export orders, export receivables or letters of credit. SBA's Senior International Credit Officers can work directly with an impacted company to explain the program and application process. Visit: <https://www.sba.gov/content/financing-your-small-business-exports-foreigninvestments-or-projects-0>

The state is working to compile a larger list of local bankers, financial associations, telecoms, utilities and major employers that may be able to provide relief, such as:

- Deferred bills, waived fees, discounts, no-interest loans and other support.
- Debt and late-penalty forgiveness for companies and workers in order to help keep people employed.
- Favorable credit terms for firms that encounter cash flow problems.

Would there be financial assistance to support my employees soon? When? How much?

Yes. The Employment Security Department expanded benefits for workers impacted by COVID-19. See who qualifies for specific benefits at

<https://esdorchardstorage.blob.core.windows.net/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/newsroom/COVID-19/covid-19-scenarios-and-benefits.pdf>

When that assistance may be available, as well as additional information on benefits for employees directed to isolate or quarantine, Temporary layoffs related to COVID-19, and Job loss related to COVID-19, can be found here: <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>.

How much will be received will depend on wage rate and hours typically worked.

Does the city/county have any way to help me let people know I'm still open?

Three examples of how local jurisdictions have developed creative ways to help their local businesses are below. Feel free to borrow these ideas to help your local business communities during this difficult time.

- [Everett for Everett](#) is an effort led by the City of Everett in partnership with the Downtown Everett Association to inform the community about ways to safely support local businesses while following social distancing.
- In Arlington, the Stilly Valley Chamber of Commerce has developed [Arlington Online](#) and the [Downtown Arlington Business Association](#) has developed [Virtual Arlington](#). Both are directories of places to eat, shop, get services, and volunteer. In addition to the webpages, they are promoting the information on social media.
- The City of Marysville is working with the Greater Marysville Tulalip Chamber of Commerce and has published [#MarysvilleLovesLocal](#), a map and listing of local restaurants offering takeout and delivery meals.

Resources for Snohomish County businesses:

Posters from the Snohomish Health District

SOCIAL DISTANCING

8.5X11 [English](#)

11X17 [English](#)

STOP THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS (BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS)

11X17

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Vietnamese](#)
- [Arabic](#)

8.5X11

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Russian](#)

- [Vietnamese](#)
- [Arabic](#)

GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH OFFICER'S ORDERS

- [March 17, 2020 Health Officer's Order in an easy to reference graphic](#)