

REBNY Resources:

Best Practices for Residential Property Managers

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) has put together the following resource to help residential property managers respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

This guideline details practices that residential management companies are utilizing in buildings they own or manage. Consistent with federal, State, and City guidelines, these recommendations are meant to help mitigate exposure to the Coronavirus within buildings.

REDUCE STAFF DENSITY WHEREVER POSSIBLE:

- Property managers should be sure to receive board approval to institute these best practices (and grant the management firm the ability to institute new safety protocols during this Coronavirus crisis).
- If you plan to adjust employees regular schedules, strongly consider maintaining employees' full pay and benefits to ensure reliable number of employees.
- If there is overlap between the shifts or job functions in the building, consider adjusting the schedules to be staggered so one is working while the other is home. For instance, if the concierge works at the same time as a doorman, stagger their shifts so they do not overlap. Similarly, given that repairs are limited to emergency work only at this time, consider having the super and handyman alternate work time if possible.
- Utilize adjustments to collective bargaining agreements to move staff to three 12-hour shifts per week rather than five 8-hour shifts.

PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO SAFELY CONTINUE WORK:

- If viable, consider providing small bonuses to staff for their shifts (for example \$100/week).
- Cover transportation costs and/or parking costs for staff to reduce reliance on public transit.

Important Note: This overview should not be construed as offering or providing legal advice in any form. The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive or complete. This document is not intended to replace the reader's need to speak with their own legal counsel regarding the issues presented. All readers should seek independent legal advice where they have specific legal questions pertaining to specific legal circumstances or where otherwise appropriate. Reader's should also consult with the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations (RAB) to ensure compliance with collective bargaining agreements where workers are covered by such agreements.

PROVIDE SAFE PRACTICES TO EMPLOYEES:

Under State guidance, social distancing of at least six feet must be maintained at all times for all employees, even workers of essential businesses.

Concierge

- Buildings can provide a marker where visitors can stand while speaking with the concierge to maintain appropriate social distancing.
- Staff should clean their works area/desk multiple times during their shift.

Doorperson

- Doors may be propped open using door stoppers, weather and other conditions permitting.
- If the building is equipped with automatic door buttons, doorpersons should be instructed only to use those buttons to open the doors to the building.
- If it is difficult for the door person to remain six feet away from another person while opening the door, have tenants open the door for themselves.
- Doorpersons should disinfect the handles to the doors as soon as reasonably practicable after use.
- Lock the door at night and require residents to open the door for themselves to eliminate the overnight shift for the doorperson.

Elevator Operators

- Tape or other designations should be placed on the floor around the elevator operator indicating the area around the elevator operator in which other individuals may not stand.
- If an elevator is not large enough to accommodate such restrictions, rules should be implemented restricting the number of people allowed in an elevator at any time.
- Use of operated elevators should be limited to members of the same family per trip.

Porters

- Ask porters to stagger shifts overnight.

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SAFELY ALLOW CONTINUATION OF MOVE-IN AND MOVE-OUT:

- Ensure that all moves adhere to social distancing requirements and that all spaces used by people entering the building are cleaned following the move.
- If possible, movers should be asked to reduce the number of trips they make from the unit to the truck by bringing all items to one location in the building (for example a basement) before going to the unit or truck.
- Require people moving and movers to use gloves and masks, if available.
- Encourage residents to postpone their plans if possible.
- If practical, consider authorizing moves during off hours (e.g. before 9 a.m. or after 9 p.m.).
- Consider offering flexible extensions to existing residents to allow individuals to remain in units during the emergency (e.g. a month-to-month lease or a 12-month extension with a 60-day cancellation rider).
- Consider imposing an additional fee to the party moving to cover costs to perform an additional cleaning of areas used for move.

ADJUST PACKAGES/DELIVERIES SYSTEM:

- Package attendants must maintain six feet social distancing from others, even during package pickup.
- Consider having a staff member sign for the package rather than have the resident sign. Identify who signed and who received the package and record in a log or web-based platform.
- Develop methods of requiring residents to pick up packages without interacting with staff.
- For food deliveries, ask residents to retrieve their food deliveries from the lobby of the building. The delivery person should leave the delivery at least six feet away from the staff who may collect it once the delivery person leave and the resident collecting the delivery should do the same from the staff.

LIMIT REPAIRS IN RESIDENCE TO EMERGENCIES ONLY:

- Consistent with State guidance, any construction work should be limited to emergencies only and must be done consistent with social distancing requirements.
- Workers should only enter a residence in the case of an emergency, such as a gas or water leak.
- If workers must enter a residence during this time, encourage workers to always maintain a distance of at least six feet from all individuals in the residence. Wherever possible, residents should remain in a room other than where the work is being performed.
- Workers should be provided with gloves while performing work in the residence.
- Building staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after the apartment visit.

CLOSINGS

- Safely commit to flexibility in order to complete transactions. REBNY has provided some recommended practices here: go.rebny.com/CoronavirusResources.

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