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# Workers File 378 Complaints Alleging COVID-related Violations at NJ Workplaces

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2020

**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Departments of Labor and Health have received 378 reports of alleged workplace health and safety violations during the COVID-19 pandemic in the week since Gov. Murphy’s executive order expanding workforce protections took effect.

The governor’s order requires employers to follow state health and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and cleaning high-touch areas. The order created a reporting mechanism for private- and public-sector employees who believe their employers are not following safety protocols. The online complaint form can be found here: <https://lwdwebpt.dol.state.nj.us/global>

“Workers who have to perform their job duties on-site during COVID-19 have the right to workplaces that put their health and safety first,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “New Jersey has always been a national leader in workplace protections. This order allows us to continue that proud tradition, enables our workforce to stay safe and keeps our economy moving forward.”

Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli added, “Safe and healthy workplaces mean greater protections for all New Jersey employees. The Department’s Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) office, which works to ensure protections for our public employees, is continuing those efforts to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to investigate employee complaints to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.”

For the week of Nov. 5-12, there were 378 reports of violations, all but 3 reported by private-sector workers.

Health and safety experts say the main reason for the discrepancy in complaints from private- and public-sector employees is that public employees have had a complaint mechanism available through the Health Department all along, while the Governor’s executive order extended protections to private-sector workers. Throughout the pandemic, the Department of Health has investigated roughly 290 COVID-related cases and responded to more than 650 COVID-related workplace issues.

Executive Order No. 192 mandates private- and public-sector employers, including state and local government entities, to adhere to certain health and safety standards in an effort to protect employees and visitors at in-person workplaces. This includes requiring workers to be at least six feet apart whenever possible, and requiring employees and visitors to wear masks upon entering worksites with limited exceptions. Face masks are to be provided to employees free of charge by their employer.

Employers must also: provide, at no cost, approved sanitization materials to employees and visitors; ensure employees exercise proper hand hygiene, including by providing them with sufficient break time to do so; sanitize frequently touched areas regularly per Department of Health and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines; implement daily health checks per CDC guidance; require sick employees to stay home while also complying with any applicable leave laws; and give timely notification to employees of any known exposure to Covid-19 at the workplace.

Additional health and safety protocols already in place for certain businesses will continue to apply. Existing sector-specific protocols can be reviewed here:



**NJ Labor Department**  
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NJ adds jobs in July; 7th consecutive months of gains. [nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/...](https://nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/)

Aug 19, 2021



**NJ Labor Department**  
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As of the latest reporting, more than \$33 billion in unemployment benefits have been sent to Garden State workers. With federal benefits set to expire on September 4, we encourage everyone to check your email and visit [MyUnemployment.nj.gov](https://MyUnemployment.nj.gov) for updates and available resources.



<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/safetystandards>

In response to the executive order, the Labor Department has launched a website -- <https://nj.gov/labor/covidsafety> -- with information on the new health and safety requirements, as well as an intake form allowing employees to report suspected violations. The Labor Department reviews the reports and, depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, performs further fact-finding and investigation with support from the Department of Health.

The goal is education and compliance, not punishment and penalties.

“It is not difficult to comply with these common-sense protocols,” Asaro-Angelo said. “State business groups agree that the overwhelming majority of employers are already taking needed precautions to protect themselves and others in their families and community.”

Local boards of health should refer reports related to Executive Order No. 192 to NJDOL at [covid.safety@dol.nj.gov](mailto:covid.safety@dol.nj.gov).

In addition, the Labor Department, in collaboration with workforce training partners, has established and is administering compliance and safety training for both businesses and workers per the executive order.

To report a suspected violation regarding the Covid-19 protections as outlined in the executive order, please visit: <https://lwdwebpt.dol.state.nj.us/global>

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