



## From the Desk of the Director: Mitigating the Spread of COVID-19

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for carefully abiding by the workplace health guidelines and policies that we have put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. It is a big reason why we have been able to continue serving Rhode Islanders and keep State offices open.

As you may know, the state has experienced a recent uptick in the COVID-19 positivity rate and hospitalizations. Please watch the following video to learn what you can do to keep you and your colleagues healthy and what changes we are making to maintain a healthy workplace environment.



At the most fundamental level, we need everyone to commit to the three W's: **Wear** your mask, **wash** your hands and **watch** your distance by staying at least 6 feet apart from others.

The recent COVID-19 data has revealed that there has been an increase in cases arising from small gatherings – people who are complying with the State's 15-person limit on gatherings

but who are not wearing face coverings or physically distancing with those outside their immediate bubble.

For example, you may count a co-worker among your 15 contacts. You may let your guard down around this individual and take off your mask or sit close to each other.

Remember, when this co-worker goes home every night, they see their family members, who go to work and school and see other people. This is how community transmission can occur, and that's what we're seeing more of recently in Rhode Island.

Toward that end, we are restricting the use of all break rooms effective immediately. Over the next few days, the tables and chairs will be removed from break rooms across State offices.

You may still use the space to retrieve your lunch and use the appliances, but you can no longer eat there. Given what we know about the uptick in cases, we cannot take the risk of having colleagues spend time together in close proximity with their masks off.

I understand that you enjoy having lunch with your colleagues, and I encourage you to take your lunch break outdoors whenever possible and maintain 6 feet of distance.

Thank you for all that you do and your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B Smiley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue highlight behind the text.

Brett Smiley  
Director  
R.I. Department of Administration