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Subject: VDSS Division of Licensing Programs Return to On-site Inspections effective June 15, 2021

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## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**DATE: June 14, 2021**  
**TO: Adult Programs and Child Welfare Programs**  
**FROM: Tara Ragland, Director, Division of Licensing Programs**  
**SUBJECT: VDSS Division of Licensing Programs Return to On-site Inspections effective June 15, 2021**

Throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Division of Licensing Programs (DOLP) has been committed to making the protection of the health and safety of our staff and community partners a top priority. The agency has taken great care to ensure that our employees' in-person interactions were both limited in scope and implemented following both federal and state guidance at both their own physical worksites, and the physical worksites of other agencies and child and adult care community partners. The agency and DOLP recognizes and understands that the health and safety of your employees and the populations you serve are also your highest priority.

In response to COVID-19, the majority of DOLP inspections over the past year were conducted through a virtual and/or a desk review process as a means of limiting in-person interaction in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support community health. With the increased efforts of the Commonwealth to vaccinate as many citizens as possible, the level of community spread has decreased significantly. Many of our child and adult care community partners took advantage of early vaccine programs and continue to encourage participants to utilize the many available statewide opportunities to become fully vaccinated.

The Division has been closely monitoring statewide disease transmission/infection statistics from VDH in addition to guidance from the CDC, VDH and the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (VDOLI) regarding the precautions necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on an evaluation of this information and the Governor's most recent announcement regarding the modification of his executive order, VDSS DOLP will resume on-site field inspections effective June 15, 2021.

Attached, you will find the DOLP COVID-19 On-site Inspection Safety Protocol and the DOLP COVID-19 Safety Expectations and Screening Form. These documents clearly outline the department's expectations for the return to on-site inspections. Inspection protocols have been updated to ensure that appropriate health and safety precautions have been implemented to minimize the spread of the virus. In addition to conducting on-site inspections, the department may still conduct remote inspections as deemed necessary.

### **Safety Expectations for On-site Inspections:**

- On the date of the on-site inspection and/or prior to, the inspector conducting the inspection will identify a point of contact at the facility and provide the DOLP COVID-19 Safety Expectations and Screening Form.
- The facility contact shall ensure that all facility personnel who will be present during the inspection have been pre-screened with the questions below. An answer of "yes" to any of the questions may result in termination or rescheduling of the inspection.
- During the inspection, the presence of personnel may be limited in the area where the licensing inspector is working.
- If present, members of the general public may be asked to leave the area the inspector is working in during the inspection.

Along with following all other guidance described in the attached VDSS DOLP COVID-19 On-site Inspection Protocol, the licensing inspector will:

- Utilize the same COVID-19 screening questions to pre-screen themselves prior to conducting the inspection. If the inspector answers "yes" to any of the questions, the inspection may be terminated or rescheduled.

- Maintain a physical distance of at least six feet or greater from individuals while on-site. It is expected that any facility personnel or others present on-site will do the same.
- Wear a face covering or any other required personal protective equipment (PPE) for the entire duration of the visit. It is expected that any facility personnel, or others who will be present during the inspection, will also wear a face covering for the entire duration of the inspection.
- Limit the items brought into the facility to only what is necessary.
- Stop the inspection and leave the premises immediately if there is a failure by the facility to comply with safety expectations or requests/reminders to observe safety expectations.
- Prior to and/or during the inspection, your licensing inspector may reach out to you in order to review and familiarize themselves with your facility's established COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Our licensing staff stands ready to serve as a resource to all providers. We will continue to notify you of any updated information.

Please contact your licensing inspector if you have any questions.

## VDSS Division of Licensing Programs COVID-19 Onsite Inspection Safety Protocol

### Protection Before, During, and After the Inspection:

- Licensing Inspectors will wear the level of Personal Protective Equipment determined to be necessary for the inspection. This determination will be made based by utilizing the Virginia Department of Labor and Industries (VDOLI) Exposure Risk Assessment procedure.
  - If a determination is made that the tasks completed and/or hazards present are Lower or Medium Exposure Risk, a face covering shall be worn. If tasks/hazards are determined to be High Exposure Risk, the inspector will wear gloves, a gown, a face shield or goggles, and a [NIOSH-approved respirator](#).
  - Licensing field staff may also substitute the NIOSH-approved respirator for the face covering, or wear any of the PPE that has been made available to them for High Exposure Risk scenarios (gown, gloves, respirator, and face shield) if it is preferred or needed.
  - PPE should be donned **before** entering the inspection area.
  - Please reference this [CDC infographic](#) for instruction on how to appropriately don and doff PPE.
- Licensing Inspectors will be careful when putting on and taking off face coverings.
  - Don't touch the face covering while wearing it.
  - Don't touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes while taking off the covering.
  - Wash your hands before putting on and after taking off the covering.
  - Dispose of single-use face covering after each use.
  - Wash cloth face coverings after each use, and dispose of them if they are ripped/torn or no longer fit appropriately.
- Licensing Inspectors will stay at least 6 feet away from workers, customers, the general public, and coworkers, when possible.
  - Schedule inspections when there are fewer workers or other people at the facility, if possible.
  - Follow CDC recommendations for travel if you must travel to conduct the inspections.
  - Do not shake hands with personnel or others in the facilities.
- Licensing Inspectors will be aware of contact with frequently touched surfaces.
  - Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes when handling frequently touched items.
  - Only bring necessary equipment to an inspection to minimize the number of items that need to be cleaned and disinfected afterwards.
  - Use folders or envelopes to segregate paper records from other materials.
- Licensing Inspectors will utilize appropriate Hand Hygiene
  - Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water aren't available.
  - Wash your hands at these key times:
    - Before, during, and after preparing food.
    - Before eating food.
    - After using the toilet.
    - Using restrooms within the facility is not recommended.
    - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
    - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings.
    - Before and after work and work breaks.
    - After touching surfaces such as desks, door handles, clipboards, pens, cameras, cell phones, laptops, keyboards, or electronic tablets.



- Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Licensing Inspectors will cover their coughs and sneezes.
  - Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
  - Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Licensing Inspectors will ensure that PPE will be doffed/removed **as soon as possible** after completion of the inspection.
  - Do not enter a vehicle wearing the gown or gloves.
  - Please reference this [CDC infographic](#) for the sequence for donning and doffing PPE.
- Licensing Inspectors will reference CDC guidance on [Travel during COVID-19](#) for more information on safety practices for vehicles, gas stations, hotels, and other related environments when traveling for inspections.
- For electronics, field tools, and documents, Licensing Inspectors will ensure that:
- Electronic tools (laptops, printers, etc...) should not be taken into the facility. Other tools (folders, clipboards, pens, etc.) taken into the facility should be minimized. All documents that would generally be created and distributed on-site should be sent electronically once you have left the premises.
  - Surfaces of tools will be cleaned using accepted industry practices.
  - Wipe down all shared pens, clipboards, phones, or other equipment with sanitizing wipes after and prior to each use. If possible, bring your own tools and do not share them with others.

#### **Reminders about Observing Safety Expectations or Stopping an Inspection:**

- ✓ Licensing Inspectors will offer reminders which may include, but are not limited to:
  - Reminding facility personnel or members of the public to create physical distance.
  - Reminding facility personnel or members of the public to wear a face covering prior to entry.
  - Asking facility personnel or members of the public to adjust a face covering if it is not worn properly (below nose, not over chin, etc.).
  - Asking facility personnel or members of the public to not enter or leave an area of the facility due to the size of the area not allowing for appropriate physical distances.
- ✓ Stopping the inspection, leave the premises immediately, and contact a supervisor if:
  - Any of the workers or members of the public at the facility appear ill; or
  - There is a failure by the facility to comply with safety expectations or requests/reminders to observe safety expectations.