

Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association, Inc.

Best Practices for Covid-19 Response

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The Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association, Inc. (“MCA”) proposes the following as Best Practices for Professional Car Washes to limit exposure to the novel coronavirus to both the employees and the customers of the car wash. The MCA submits that most professional car washes can be operated safely by following CDC and OSHA recommendations. Car wash operation is a “lower exposure risk (caution)” as defined by OSHA.

“Lower exposure risk (caution) jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 nor frequent close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) the general public. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.” *Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19*, OSHA 3990-03 2020, p. 20.

“Businesses and employers can prevent and slow the spread of COVID 19. Employers should plan to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of disease transmission in the community and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed.” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. As appropriate, all employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices, including:

- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Actively maintain a minimum 6’ distance between employees and each other and between employees and customers.
- Actively encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Provide customers and the public with tissues and trash receptacles. ...
- Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment. When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, PPE).

There are a several types of car washes and each presents different issues for safe operation. However, common to all car wash types, is training of employees to follow the CDC guidelines at all times. To wear gloves and masks, to wash their hands regularly, avoid touching their face, and maintain a 6’ distance between all staff and customers at all times. All car wash operators will need to address whether they will adopt screening procedures for employees, which may include body temperature checks and other limited medical inquiries, as encouraged by the CDC and limited by the ADA.

Self-Serve and In-Bay Automatic – The self service and in-bay automatic type of car wash typically have a row of individual bays that accept credit cards, cash or tokens. In the self-serve bay, the customer gets out of the

car and uses the pressure gun and brush wand to wash the car. The gun dispenses a variety of high- and low-pressure soaps and waxes that range from mild to strong. In the in-bay automatic bay, the customer stays in the car while the machine moves around the car spraying high-and low-pressure soaps and waxes onto the vehicle.

1. Can be run without employees on site much of the time. However, depending on individual circumstances, an employee needs to empty trash containers, service equipment, and to a lesser extent assist the customer. Most equipment accepts credit cards directly, some requires cash or coins with changers on site to break bills and dispense tokens.
2. Employees are issued gloves and masks and instructed how to use them to protect themselves from infection.
3. Bill and Coin changers can be handled so that coins are put out of service for 3 days between uses. Bills are handled by gloved hands only.
4. Buttons on bill changers, pay stations and kiosks are wiped down and sanitized periodically during the day.
5. Rubber gloves can be made available to customers.
6. Self-serve vacuuming can be configured to limit the distance between customers. It is site specific but can be managed, for example, by only opening every other vacuum stall.
7. The hours of operation can be modified such that at least one employee is present during operation.

Express Exterior Tunnel – The express tunnel type of car wash is like the Full Serve tunnel except that it is designed to run with fewer employees. Typically, the customer pays at an automated pay station or if they have bought a monthly pass, the car is identified, and the wash initiated with the driver never having to roll down the window. In some cases, an attendant may have to guide the vehicle onto the conveyor track. This is accomplished with doors and windows closed while the attendant gives the customer hand signals. The express tunnel has many air blowers at the end of the line, so it is not necessary to towel dry the car.

1. Employees are issued gloves and masks and instructed how to use them to protect themselves from infection.
2. No person to person contact.
3. Self-serve vacuuming can be configured to limit the distance between customers. It is site specific but can be managed, for example, by only opening every other vacuum stall.

Full Serve Tunnels – The Full Serve Tunnel generally has a long automated conveyORIZED tunnel and offers comprehensive detailing services. Many “full serves” can operate as an express and have incorporated many of the labor-saving methods of the Express Tunnel. Most “full serves” offer the monthly plan like the express.

1. Employees are issued gloves and masks and instructed how to use them to protect themselves from infection.
2. Move the cash register station outside so that the customer can stay in the car.
3. Only 2 people drying the car, one on each side, keeping 6’ apart.
4. If a site needs a greeter, there must be a 6’ minimum distance between the greeter and the customer.
5. The full serve often has the equipment and expertise to sanitize the interior of a vehicle. There are fogs and other methods. In some cases, the customer can be instructed how to do it, in other cases, it’s a job for a trained professional.