Exam Health Safety Plan for COVID-19

Winter 2023; All Locations

Introduction
The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA), as part of its essential regulatory functions delegated to it by the Washington Supreme Court, must hold licensing exams for persons seeking to be licensed as a lawyer or limited practice officer (LPO).

Most COVID-19 mandates, orders, and other related requirements in Washington state have already been lifted or will be lifted by November 1, 2022. Nevertheless, in order to protect everyone at the exam sites against COVID-19 infection, the WSBA is implementing this Exam Health Safety Plan for COVID-19, which includes a requirement that all examinees, WSBA staff, and proctors at the exam sites wear a well-fitting mask for the health safety of those in attendance and as recommended by the CDC when “there are a lot of people around.”

Health Safety Plan
The WSBA’s Exam Health Safety Plan is outlined below.

Health Safety Screenings Upon Arrival
- All examinees, staff, and proctors are required to check their temperature prior to arriving at the exam site.
- All examinees, staff, and proctors will be screened, by oral questioning, upon arrival at the exam site for symptoms of COVID-19 that are not caused by another condition.
- All examinees, staff, and proctors must be able to answer “no” to the following questions in order to remain at the exam site:
  - Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past five (5) days?
  - Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 that are not caused by another condition?
    - fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea

Face Coverings Required
- All examinees will be required to wear a face covering at all times while on the premises except for brief periods necessary to confirm the examinees’ identities, to eat or drink, or in the case of a health emergency.
- Examinees are to bring their own face coverings, but the WSBA will provide a face mask if an examinee does not have one.
- The face covering, must be well fitting and cover the nose and mouth. Face shields are not a sufficient face covering, although they can be used in conjunction with a face covering.
If an individual examinee is unable to wear a face covering while taking the exam because of a medical condition, the examinee must submit a testing-accommodation request by December 5, 2022, through the WSBA Online Admissions Site. All testing-accommodation requests require medical documentation supporting the requested accommodation and will be evaluated on an individual basis. Any examinee granted a testing accommodation to take the exam without a face covering may be seated in a room with other examinees without a face covering and will be required to certify that the examinee tested negative for COVID-19 after taking an at-home COVID-19 test no more than 24 hours prior to the first day of the exam.

All staff and proctors will be required to wear a face covering at all times while on the premises, except for brief periods necessary for exam security purposes, to eat or drink, or in the case of a health emergency.

At the time this plan was created, the CDC Mask Guidance was to “Wear a mask in public places where there are a lot of people around.” Not only will there be a lot of people at the exam sites, but they will be in close proximity with other examinees, proctors, or staff for extended periods of time.

Physical Distancing
In the interest of everyone’s health safety and as a best practice, the WSBA will seat applicants in the exam room as far apart as possible given the size of the exam room and the number of examinees. Bar exam applicants should expect to share a table with one other examinee. No other physical distancing requirements will be in place.

Hygiene
Examinees, staff, and proctors are asked to regularly wash their hands thoroughly, using the restroom facilities available at the exam sites.

The WSBA will provide hand sanitizer at check-in locations, all entrances and exits to exam rooms, and at the designated entry points to the exam sites in general.

The WSBA will provide tissues and locate them throughout exam rooms and common areas.

Cleaning and Disinfecting
Exam rooms, assigned seats, high-touch surface areas, and bathrooms all will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

COVID-19 Positive, Sick, or Symptomatic Examinee, Bar Staff, or Proctor
Examinees and proctors are to immediately report any illness or onset of COVID-19 symptoms during the exam to Bar staff. Bar staff are to immediately report any illness or onset of COVID-19 symptoms during the exam to the exam site supervisor, whether the illness or symptom is experienced by Bar staff, or by an examinee, or a proctor.

The WSBA will cooperate with the state and local health department regarding any further actions including contact tracing if necessary.
• Examinees who test positive with COVID-19 or who have new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 not caused by another condition within five days of the exam or at the exam site will not be permitted to sit for the exam. Such examinees should notify the WSBA admissions team at admissions@wsba.org of their circumstances; they will be withdrawn from the exam and receive a full refund to reapply for the next exam.

• The “five days prior to the exam” exclusion period is based on CDC recommendations that people who test positive or have symptoms should isolate for at least five days.

Subject to Change
National, state, or local health mandates and CDC recommendations in place at the time of the exams may require changes to this plan and additional protocols and procedures may need to be enforced for the health safety of all. Examinees, WSBA staff, and proctors will be notified of any changes to this plan as soon as practicable.