
COVID-19 Interim Shelter Guidance

March 9, 2020

Goal addressed by this guidance

Minimize the spread of communicable disease among individuals in shelters for people experiencing homelessness.

Cover coughs and sneezes

Post signage in kitchens, bathrooms and common areas, make tissues available with trash cans and hand hygiene options nearby.

Hand sanitizer and/or hand washing

The most important measure for preventing the spread of pathogens is effective hand hygiene. Hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol) available near points of entry. Washing with warm water and soap is as effective. Promote both. Post signage, verbally cue people, have staff model. Make sure that you have adequate supplies for good hand hygiene, including clean and functional hand washing stations, soap, paper towels, trash receptacles and alcohol-based sanitizer.

Mask guidance for staff and guests

Outside of a healthcare setting, masks are most effectively used by sick individuals to prevent spread of their secretions and cough droplets to others.

Staff and Volunteers

- Assure staff and volunteers do not come to work sick. Any staff or volunteers who become sick at work should be sent home.
- Staff should wash or sanitize hands frequently, and try not to touch their face.
- Healthy staff should not wear masks, unless spending extended time in an area designated for guests with coughs or providing direct care to sick guests.
- Sick staff and volunteers should stay home until they are well.

Guests

Staff should identify guests who have a new, worse, or different cough. These guests should wear masks to contain secretions/droplets. Staff can review correct mask use in order to assist guests.

Use a mask correctly:

- The mask should fit snugly over the face.
- The colored side of the mask faces outwards.
- The strings or elastic bands are positioned properly to keep the mask firmly in place.
- The mask covers both your nose and mouth.
- The metallic strip is molded to the bridge of your nose.

Watch this video about how to wear a mask correctly:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VbojLOQe94>

Exclusion

Strongly consider asking the guest to leave only if both of the following are true:

- They are coughing
- They are unwilling to use a mask

Bed spacing

The COVID-19 virus is most likely to be transmitted to someone within six-feet of the infectious person. Understanding that most shelters cannot create six-foot spacing between each bed, and guests interact closely in dining, restroom, and other common areas. The goal is to separate individuals with possible respiratory illness symptoms (coughing, fever, shortness of breath) from those without symptoms.

Attempt to maintain a six-foot separation between the coughing and the non-coughing guests in sleeping areas.

Shelters can maintain full capacity if this separation and buffer can be created. Shelters may reduce their census if needed to improve spacing in sleeping areas.

Meals, restrooms and other common areas

Since individuals with a cough need to unmask to eat, individuals with known respiratory symptoms should eat with maximum spacing from others, and in a place with maximum ventilation, including outside, if necessary, or offering meals to go. Be diligent in following hygiene and food safety rules about keeping food covered, not using personal utensils in shared containers, washing hands before eating and handling shared objects, and cleaning kitchen surfaces and dining areas between use.

Where space allows, maintain daytime common area space separation for coughing guests and non-coughing guests, like sleeping areas. Guests who are coughing may occupy shared space, such as restrooms, if masked.

Cleaning

Increase frequency of your routine cleaning and disinfection program to the extent feasible, emphasizing cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces like bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

Special cleaning procedures and products are not necessary as long as there are standard procedures for cleaning and disinfecting with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant with a claim for human coronaviruses.

Custodial or EVS staff should follow the disinfectant manufacturer's instructions for use Including:

- Using the proper concentrations of disinfectant
- Allowing required wet contact time

Resources

CDC Hand Hygiene Posters

English: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/Handwashing-Middle-School-8x11-p.pdf>

Spanish <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/wash-your-hands-poster-spanish-508.pdf>

Chinese: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/wash-your-hands-poster-chinese-508.pdf>

CDC How to Wash your hands poster

English: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/wash-your-hands-poster-english-508.pdf>

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/Handwashing-Middle-School-SPANISH-8x11-p.pdf>

CDC Clean Hands for 20 seconds poster

English: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/HH-Posters-Eng-Restroom-508.pdf>

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/HH-Posters-Spa-Restroom-508.pdf>

Cover your cough poster

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/index.html>