
ACHCH Shelter Health Guidance for COVID-19 and Influenza:

March 18, 2020

The following are Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless guidance and recommendations for service agencies providing care for people experiencing homelessness regarding the COVID-19 Virus.

1. [Plan and be aware of guidance and resources](#)
2. [Provide education for staff and residents](#)
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1. Plan and be aware of COVID-19 guidance and resources

- a. Shelter Providers Community Call Wednesday 10:30-11:30am
Call 888-204-5984 Access Code: 710-5040#
- b. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless guidance and resources at
<https://www.achch.org/coronavirus>
- c. Alameda County Public Health updates and guidance at:
<http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>
- d. **SUPPLIES:** ACHCH is working to locate and distribute supplies, and to assess outreach provider needs. PLEASE fill out this supply assessment sheet with the correct contact information for your program/organization/effort:
<https://forms.gle/PLmG7CN8ypfy1ERDA> This is not an “order” form, but will help us to distribute supplies if and when we can get them.

2. Provide Education for staff and residents

- Make sure that flyers and have credible educational information clearly visible and available to staff and clients. ACHCH recommends posting the following information: [Symptoms](#), [Cover Your Cough](#), [Wash Your Hands](#), [What to Know](#)
- If you feel sick, DON'T COME TO WORK! *No-one needs “heroes” who may spread infection to their co-workers and clients.*
- Assess staff and volunteers for potential exposure risks. Redirect vulnerable (aging, chronic illness) staff or volunteers from higher risk positions providing prolonged close contact.

- Train staff on COVID as well as on handwashing, cough, and other hygiene techniques. Train staff on procedures around self-protection, disease identification and control.
- **Avoid any close contact with symptomatic persons.** Have Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) on hand for situations involving close contact with symptomatic persons.
- Maintain program point persons in contact with the ACHCH program or Public Health department.

PPE Supplies:
Protective Personal Equipment includes: **Face shields, gowns, gloves, N95 face masks**

3. Provide hygiene and prevention materials to residents:

- Give all residents easy access to soap, water and hand-drying resources.
 - Make hand sanitizer available for general use, and offer personal-sized hand sanitizer for clients to take. Ensure that handwashing is frequently done.
 - Make tissue/Kleenex and waste baskets available.
- Encourage the use of and distribute *disposable face masks* to any person with a cough or other symptoms. ACHCH is working to distribute these to shelters, please stay in contact with us.

Information on Face Masks and Respirators

There are key differences between face masks and respirators:

Disposable surgical face mask	N95 Respirator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “surgical mask, disposable mask, medical mask” • Looser fitting • Keeps virus from getting OUT of a sick person (sneeze, coughing, talking) to protect OTHERS. • Also can protect from splashes/drops coming from a sick person • Good for any sick/symptomatic person to wear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “N95 air filter” • Must be tightly fitted, filters air coming IN • Hard to breathe through if you are sick, young or old. • Not recommended for general use during viral pandemic. • Health workers use when directly treating infected patients • Useful for staff when forced to deal closely with a symptomatic person.

- If someone has a cough or is sneezing, please have them wear a disposable face mask when they are within six feet of other people.
- Change the mask if it gets saturated, and dispose of it safely.
- Wash hands before and after changing mask to prevent spread of germs.

4. Screen residents and clients for symptoms and risk:

- Provide Health Screening at intake and on a daily basis:

Screening questions:

Are you currently experiencing any of the following:

- Fever (temperature over 101 degrees)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath, respiratory difficulties

Have you had recent contact with anyone known to have COVID infection?

ACHCH Recommends: *Staff should have a temporal thermometer to help screen residents and clients for fever.*

- b. Identify your shelter residents who may be at high risk of death or severe illness if they were infected with COVID:
- Age 60+
 - Other chronic conditions like heart, lung or liver disease
 - Immune compromise (HIV, cancer, etc).

Stay updated with the ACHCH program regarding developing isolation/housing resources for high-risk individuals.

5. Contact health providers for testing or treatment of symptomatic persons

If a person develops symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough or shortness of breath, call their health care provider or local health department before seeking care. They will likely tell most people to “isolate at home” unless they are in a medical emergency. There is currently little testing capacity – this will change – keep in touch with the ACHCH around this.

- Here is a [list of countywide primary care providers](#).
- Contact the HCH program if you believe someone with COVID symptoms, needs isolation and treatment, and cannot contact a primary care provider: 510-891-8950 (business hours) and email COVIDACHCH@acgov.org, or contact ACPHD (925) 422-7595 outside of business hours.
- If a person has severe symptoms (shaking, high fevers, difficulty breathing, difficulty walking, inability to stay hydrated, unable to care for self in shelter/tent) CALL 911.
- **Testing:** At this time, very limited testing is done through primary care providers, hospitals or the Emergency Department. There are no places to go to “get tested.” Testing is done as part of treatment of persons with confirmed contact to COVID cases or for very ill or very high risk persons. This will change, so keep in touch with the ACHCH program
- **Transportation:** At this time ACHCH does not recommend transporting symptomatic patients on your own, nor through rideshare or taxis. We are working on guidance for PPE while transporting patients and on alternatives to ambulance transport.

6. Practice social distancing in the shelter setting:

All residents should follow current [County orders](#) around Shelter in Place.

Shelter providers should limit the spaces between people, the number of people who congregate and interact together. People with symptoms should self-isolate, and wear face masks when close to others.

Examples of Social Distancing in Shelter Setting:

- Uses tissue or paper towel if you have to touch commonly touched surfaces
- Practice frequent handwashing and sanitizing.

- Keep 6 feet of “social distancing” with other people, avoid handshakes, hugs, etc.
- Divide up sleeping spaces into smaller groups, with at least 6’ between each bed.
- Create room dividers to separate beds.
- Get “grab and go” lunches and meals and stagger meals to enable people to eat at separate times and locations.

7. Isolate and provide care for symptomatic persons

- a. Symptomatic persons with no other isolation options should be enabled to temporarily isolate, ideally in a separate, well-ventilated room, kept out of close contact (6’) of others, arrange to receive “to go” bag lunches, water, tissue and face masks. They should be provided with medical care information and “home” isolation [Tips and Guidance](#) is available from Alameda County.
- b. **Identify isolation spaces for symptomatic persons:** Designate a space for people who may become sick. If possible, designate a nearby separate bathroom just for sick people. Develop a plan for cleaning the room at least daily.
 - Encourage the client to lie down and rest. Most will want to do this.
 - Prevent dehydration. Encourage client to drink plenty of water, clear soup, decaffeinated tea, juice. Bring food to the client as much as possible to avoid contact with other persons.
 - Provide client with face mask, hand sanitizer, tissues and plastic bag or lined garbage bag to dispose of tissues.
 - Encourage client to cough into their elbow area or cover their mouth with tissues or paper towels when they cough or sneeze.
 - Avoid housing the sick person in a room with people who have health conditions that increase their risk of complications from COVID-19, these include but not limited to HIV, asthma, diabetes and pregnancy.
 - Increase spacing between beds so that the sick person’s bed is six feet from the next bed.
 - Arrange beds so that persons lie head-to-toe or toe-to-toe to provide the greatest distance between faces.
 - Use sheets or curtains to create temporary barriers between beds.
 - Check in on client several times a day.

8. Sanitation recommendations:

- a. Please refer closely to the Seattle King County [Seattle King County Sanitation and Hygiene Guide](#).
- b. Cleaning and Disinfecting Shelters and Programs
 - High touch areas likely to be contaminated should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily.
 - A 10% bleach solution (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon water) is adequate to kill COVID virus. After cleaning, let a bleach solution stand for 3-5 minutes and air dry. More detailed information [here](#).

- Be sure to use a separate procedure for first cleaning a surface, then disinfecting it: Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time (e.g., letting it stand for 3 to 5 minutes). with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs, *after* the surface has been cleaned with soap and water.
- Personnel performing the cleaning and disinfecting should use disposable gloves.
- Use damp cleaning methods. Dry dusting or sweeping can cause airborne virus droplets.
- Change mop heads, rags, and similar items used for cleaning and disinfecting frequently.
- Clean, disinfect, and dry equipment used for cleaning after each use.
- Items such as dishes, linens, or eating utensil do not need to be cleaned separately, but it important to note these items should not be shared or used by others.
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* All Information gathered from

[Seattle King County Sanitation and Hygiene Guide](#)

[HUD Infectious Disease Toolkit for Shelters](#)

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>