



Guidelines for General Industry on 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

COVID-19 Guideline



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Guidelines for General Industry on 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

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Purpose: This interim guidelines provides guidance to employers in the general industry to prevent the exposure to and infection with, the novel coronavirus—officially named SARS-CoV-2, which causes the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Business Continuity:

Essential Business: All the essential businesses as defined by your respective county health orders shall continue to do business as long as they follow 6 ft of social distancing, provision for hand washing, make arrangements for non-essentials staff to work from home and ask sick people to stay at home.

What guidance should general industry follow with respect to 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) from a California OSHA perspective?

As the Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATD) Standard (California Code of Regulations, title 8, [section 5199](#)) is not applicable for general industry, Cal/OSHA recommends employers to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

The CDC guidelines are summarized below:

- Actively encouraging sick employees to stay home
- Sending employees with acute respiratory illness symptoms home immediately
- Providing information and training to employees on:
 - Cough and sneeze etiquette
 - Hand hygiene
 - Avoiding close contact with sick persons
 - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Avoiding sharing personal items with co-workers (i.e. dishes, cups, utensils, towels)
 - Providing tissues, no-touch disposal trash cans and hand sanitizer for use by employees

- Performing routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of shared workspaces such as team rooms, conference rooms and workplace equipment and furniture (disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended)
- Advising employees to check [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) prior to travel

The CDC guidelines also contain recommendations for creating an infectious disease outbreak response plan to be followed in the event of an outbreak. These response plans include one or more of the following:

- Allowing flexible worksites, telecommuting and flexible work hours to increase physical distance among employees
- Using other methods of minimizing exposure between employees, and between employees and the public
- Postponing or canceling large work-related meetings or events

Other Cal/OSHA Regulations for Workplaces Where There is Significant Risk of Exposure

Although the scope of the ATD Standard is limited to certain employers, there are other Cal/OSHA regulations that apply to all employers. These may be applicable to protect employees from exposure to the coronavirus where there is a significant risk in the workplace.

Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)

All employers must have an IIPP (title 8 [section 3203](#)) to protect employees from workplace hazards. Employers are required to determine if COVID-19 infection is a hazard in their workplace. If it is a workplace hazard, then employers must:

- Implement measures to prevent or reduce infection hazards, such as implementing the CDC recommended actions listed above
- Provide training to employees on their COVID-19 infection prevention methods

Washing Facilities

Regardless of COVID-19 risk, all employers must provide washing facilities that have an adequate supply of suitable cleansing agents, water and single-use towels or blowers (title 8 sections [1527](#), [3366](#), [3457](#) and [8397.4](#)).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Title 8 [section 3380](#) Personal Protective Devices requires employers to conduct a hazard assessment to determine if hazards are present in the workplace that necessitate the use of PPE. If an employer identifies COVID-19 as a workplace hazard, they must select and provide exposed employees with properly fitting PPE that will effectively protect employees.

Control of Harmful Exposures

Title 8 [section 5141](#) Control of Harmful Exposures requires employers to protect employees from inhalation exposures that can result in injury, illness, disease, impairment or loss of function. COVID-19 is a harmful exposure if there is an increased risk of infection at the workplace. Employers must implement engineering controls where feasible and administrative controls where practicable, or provide respiratory protection where engineering and administrative controls cannot protect employees and during emergencies. The CDC recommendations above describe some useful administrative controls. For more information on respirator use see [section 5144](#) and the federal OSHA [respiratory protection etool](#). Surgical and other non-respirator face masks do not protect persons from airborne infectious disease and cannot be relied upon for novel pathogens. They do not prevent inhalation of virus particles because they do not seal to the person's face and are not tested to the filtration efficiencies of respirators.

How to clean and disinfect in the event of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case at workplace?

In general, there is no need to panic. Stay calm and have a plan in advance as we should anticipate this in the workplace due to the community spread of the virus. Here are a few steps:

Step 1: Cordon off the area where employee with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 was located. In addition, find out from employee's manager, all the location including team rooms, conference rooms that employee would have used while on site. Open door if applicable for additional ventilation and wait for 24 hours or as long as possible before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

Step 2: Cleaning and Disinfection

Hard Surfaces (non-porous):

- Step 2.1:Cleaning If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Step 2.2: Disinfection: For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc.

Soft Surfaces:

For Soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:

- If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
 - Otherwise, use products [that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#) and that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Step 3: Electronics:

For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, microwave and elevator buttons, remove visible contamination if present.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
- If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Step 4: Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hand Hygiene for cleaning Staff:

- The risk of exposure to cleaning staff is inherently low. Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
 - Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to **clean hands** after removing gloves.
 - If gowns are not available, coveralls, aprons or work uniforms can be worn during cleaning and disinfecting. Reusable (washable) clothing should be laundered afterwards. Clean hands after handling dirty laundry.
- Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE such as a tear in gloves or any other potential exposures to their supervisor.
- **Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often**, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Additional key times to clean hands include:
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before eating or preparing food.
 - After contact with animals or pets.
 - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance such as a child.

As an Employer – what should I know about the face mask recommended by CDC guideline?

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. From their recent studies, they have learned that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure. Several employers are now offering reusable cloth mask to the employees.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

References:

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Cal/OSHA Interim Guidelines for General Industry on 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Guidance for Protecting Workers from COVID-19 tri-fold brochure](#)

[COVID-19 OSHA](#)

<https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases/national/03142020>