

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) situation is rapidly evolving, therefore, Public Safety and First Responders are encouraged to check the Department of Public Health COVID-19 [webpage](#) and the CDC [website](#) for current information.

1. What are the typical symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to people becoming severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and dying.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

2. How is the virus spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

3. What should I do if I have to interact with a person with respiratory symptoms?

If the person has a fever, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, or cough:

- If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.
- Place a surgical mask on the person and place a mask on yourself. Wear gloves if there will be physical contact
- Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/ Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone that has symptoms of fever and cough or shortness of breath and who may require evaluation at a healthcare facility.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds after contact. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If close contact has occurred with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 noted above, be sure to clean and disinfect your duty belt and gear prior to reusing it with a household cleaning spray or wipe and follow standard procedures for disposal of any personal protective equipment and for laundering of clothes.



Key Points

- If the person shows symptoms of fever, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, and cough, place a surgical mask on the person.
- Wear a mask yourself if the individual has symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath.

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4. What else can I do to protect myself?

As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses. You should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Get a flu shot to prevent influenza if you have not done so this season.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others as much as possible.
- Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and participate in all-hands training on the use of Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) for respiratory protection, if available.

5. I think I have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. What steps do I take?

- If you were within 6 feet of the ill individual for more than 10 minutes or had unprotected direct contact to respiratory secretions of the ill individual (e.g. cough or sneeze on face), then you should stay home in quarantine for 14 days from the date of the contact. Be sure to notify your supervisor if they exposure occurred at work so that the supervisor can determine whether other employees may also have had a similar exposure to the ill individual since those employees should be in quarantine as well.

6. Where can I go to get tested for COVID-19?

- It is important to note that we are currently recommending that providers only test individuals for whom the test results will change the management of the disease. If you do speak with your provider and they decide that testing is not necessary even though you have symptoms, you just have to stay home and away from work for at least 3 days (72 hours) after recovery, which means your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications and there is an improvement in your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. See [home care guidance](#) for additional instructions for what to do when you are at home.
- Since most people will get better with rest and time, there is no need to see a doctor or to get tested if you do not have symptoms or your symptoms are mild.

7. What should a supervisor do if an employee worked while ill and exposed other frontline public safety workers?

- As with any sick employee, this individual must stay home and self-isolate until at least 7 days have passed after the symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after he/she has recovered. Recovery means that fever is gone for 72 hours (3 days) without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

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- Meanwhile, identify those co-workers or members of the public with whom the employee came into close contact while symptomatic (closer than six feet, more than 10 minutes) and instruct those individuals to quarantine themselves for 14 days from the date of last contact. If this directive causes staffing shortages that will increase overall public risk, exposed employees who show no signs of illness may return to work with twice-daily temperature and symptom checks and wearing protective masks for 14 days (if masks are available) after exposure. Infection control guidance should be carefully reviewed, to prevent exposed individuals from putting additional coworkers or members of the public at risk.
- If the infected individual had broad contact with the members of the public whom you cannot identify -- for example, if the person who is ill is a police officer who was assigned to break up large gatherings in a park or on a beach – the best option may be to post a notice on your website or social media page indicating the risk of exposure at a particular time and place and providing the guidance for people who have been exposed, that you can view at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/COVHomeQuarantine.pdf>.
- Notify the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Acute Communicable Disease Control Program (213)-240-7941 during daytime hours or (213) 974-1234 (After Hours Emergency Operator) if two or more staff who have had close contact become sick with acute respiratory illness (suspects) within 72 hours.

8. Are there measures that staff can use to preserve facemasks?

Due to current shortages, we are encouraging healthcare workers to employ [contingency measures](#) to preserve limited supplies of face masks as recommended by the CDC. This includes extending the use of facemasks for multiple patients:

- The facemask should be removed and discarded if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
- Staff must take care not to touch their facemask. If they touch or adjust their facemask, they must immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Staff should leave the patient care area if they need to remove the facemask.
- At the current time, we are not instituting crisis measures for facemask use so storage of masks between patient encounters is currently not recommended. **If a facemask is removed it should be discarded.**

You can also refer to CDC's Guidance on [What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know about Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) for additional information.

Always check with reliable sources for the up-to-date, accurate information about COVID-19.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
 - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

If you have questions and would like to speak to someone call 2-1-1.