

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Field Staff (non-healthcare workers)

Recent Updates:

11/7/20: Updated information about what to do if you have symptoms and when to isolate. Added resources for coping with stress.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. This guidance applies to those workers who might have to enter a private home or community building during the course of their duties.

Understand how coronaviruses are spread

Like other respiratory illnesses, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing and talking;
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person;
- It may be possible for someone to get COVID-19 by touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands but this is not thought to be the main way it is spread.

Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

Personal Protections

- Wear a cloth face covering anytime you must interact with others. Wearing a face covering is in no way a substitute for physical (social) distancing and other prevention measures like washing your hands regularly. See [Cloth Face Covering Guidance](#) for more information.
 - Mechanical tradespeople working near plumbing vents and rooftop HVAC exhaust, or other types of exhaust fans in residences and buildings, should use a face shield and a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator. If respirators are not available, an ASTM-rated surgical mask must be used.
 - Mechanical tradespeople working on sewage plumbing must use a face shield and an impermeable face cover. If the work may disperse sewage droplets into the air (such as sewer drain snaking), a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator, should be used.
- Contact customers in advance, ideally the day of or the day before the appointment is scheduled, to confirm the appointment and ask if any member of the household or personnel on-site is exhibiting any symptoms, has been sick or is currently sick, or whether anyone on the premises has been exposed to someone who has been sick. If the customer answers “yes” for any of those questions, reschedule the appointment at least 14 days in the future.
 - During the advance call, request customers use face coverings during the appointment and emphasize the importance of maintaining a safe distance of at least six feet from the worker entering the residence or building.
- For tasks or situations where you cannot avoid being in direct contact with people at the site stop and



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think through how you can protect yourself and others as much as possible. Strategies include:

- Working in a well-ventilated space that is not crowded if possible (outdoors is safer than indoors).
- Keeping the interaction as short as possible.
- Carrying a kit with supplies such as gloves, face coverings, hand sanitizer and wipes.
- Wash your hands 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 a 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.
- Avoid or clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces often using manufacturer approved cleaning products.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your elbow (not your hands).
- When at the site adopt physical distancing standard practices whenever possible.
 - Consider alternative ways to provide services, education, and support and offer your customary services in places that allow for maximum distancing between clients and field staff.
- Know the symptoms of COVID-19
 - Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild symptoms to severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and death.
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 may include one or more of the following: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell.
- Contact your supervisor if you arrive at a site and there are COVID-19 safety concerns. Along with your supervisor, determine if there are any components of the work that can be done safely. If your company offers remote services consider offering the client virtual customer service support.
 - Remain at least 6 feet away from symptomatic individuals.
 - Advise and/or help the client to seek urgent medical care or call 9-1-1 if there are emergency warning signs. Otherwise encourage clients to call their doctor before going into a clinic, urgent care or ER for evaluation is possible. If they do not have a doctor they can call 2-1-1 for assistance finding a health care provider.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds after any physical contact with the client, if no hand wash station is available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- When working in a private residence, minimize contact with customers' personal belongings. Similarly, in commercial or public buildings, limit interaction in the facility and avoid touching surfaces where possible.
- Items at the site that you touch should be cleaned with disinfecting wipes prior to and after the service is performed.
- After completion of work at a residence or building, remove all personal protective equipment and face coverings and wash your hands and face. Face coverings should be washed or replaced daily.
- Only bring necessary equipment to the personal residence or site to minimize the number of items that need to be cleaned and disinfected afterwards.



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Take extra care if you are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19

- Some people are more likely to become seriously ill if they get COVID-19. This includes people age 65 years of age and older, people with HIV or cancer who may have weakened immune systems, and those with heart or lung disease. It is very important that these people take extra care to avoid close contact with other people who are sick and contact their healthcare provider immediately if they do become sick.
- Develop back-up plans with your supervisor and with colleagues to ensure the continuity of essential services should there be a need for you and others to be absent from work.

Know what to do if you become ill

- If you get symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider and get tested for COVID-19. You should stay home and protect others until you get the result of your COVID-19 test or until your provider tells you that you don't have COVID-19. For more guidance, read *Learn About Symptoms & What To Do If You Are Sick* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare).
- If you have a positive COVID-19 test or your provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, you should follow the Home Isolation Instructions (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). These include staying home for at least 10 days from when your symptoms first appeared AND at least 1 day (24 hours) after your fever has gone without the use of medications AND your symptoms have improved.
- Older adults, and those with weak immune systems or underlying health problems who experience COVID-19 symptoms should call their doctor early, even if they have mild symptoms.
- If you develop emergency warning signs such as: difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, bluish lips or face, confusion or difficulty waking up should call 9-1-1 immediately or go to an emergency room. If it is not urgent, call your doctor before going in to seek care.
- If you have a positive COVID-19 test be sure to tell all of your [close contacts](#) that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. See the *Home Quarantine Instructions for Close Contacts to COVID-19* (ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for the most recent definition of a close contact and additional guidance.

Coping with Stress

When you hear, read, or watch news about COVID-19, it is normal to feel anxious and overwhelmed. It is important to care for your mental as well as your physical health. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage (211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health) provide local resources to address mental health & wellbeing needs and concerns. Guidance and resources are also available on the CDC webpage, [Coping with Stress](#). To talk to someone, call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771 or call 2-1-1.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. Visit Public Health's COVID-19 scams webpage (ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams) for information and resources on how to avoid COVID-19 health



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care scams.

Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through press releases, social media, and our website. The website has more information on COVID-19 including FAQs, infographics and a guide to coping with stress, as well as tips on handwashing.

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - Social media: @lapublichealth

Other reliable sources of information about novel coronavirus are:

- 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, or need help finding medical care, call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24 hours a day.

