

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Protocol for Law Enforcement Responding to Protests

Recent Updates:

11/21/20: Updates made to how COVID-19 is transmitted and what to do if staff are

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health recognizes the rights of individuals to engage in political expression, including, the right to petition the government in peaceful ways. In-person public protests are allowed under the current Health Officer Order. It is critically important for the protection of both law enforcement personnel and individuals that certain infection control and physical distancing practices are adhered to when responding to public protests.

Employee Protection:

- All employees should be told not to come to work if sick, or if they are exposed to a person who has COVID-19. Employees should be instructed to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation and quarantine, if applicable. Workplace leave policies should be reviewed and modified to ensure that employees are not penalized when they stay home due to illness.
- If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19 they should talk to a healthcare provider and get a test for COVID-19. They should stay home and protect others until they get the result of their COVID-19 test or until their provider tells them that they don't have COVID-19.
 - If they test negative using a molecular test for COVID-19 or a provider instructs them that they don't have COVID-19, they should stay home until they are fever-free without the help of fever-reducing medicines for at least 24 hours and their symptoms have improved.
 - If they test positive for COVID-19 or their provider thinks that they have COVID-19, they must follow the [Home Isolation Instructions](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation) closely (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- Upon being informed that one or more employees have COVID-19 (case), a plan or protocol should be put in place to have the immediate self-quarantine of all employees that had a workplace exposure to the case(s). The employer's plan should consider a protocol for all quarantined employees to have access to or be tested for COVID-19 in order to determine whether there have been additional workplace exposures, which may require additional COVID-19 control measures.
- Symptom checks should be conducted before employees enter the worksite. Evaluations must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath or fever and any other symptoms the employee may be experiencing. These checks can be done remotely or in person upon the employees' arrival. A temperature check should be done at the worksite if feasible.
- In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer should report this outbreak to the Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821
- All employees who have contact with the public or other employees during their shift (s) should be offered, at no cost, a cloth face covering. The covering is to be worn by the employee at all times during the workday when in contact or likely to come into contact with others.

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Pre-Event Training:

Preparation is a primary component to ensure that law enforcement is ready to respond safely to mass demonstrations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Training protocols should include at minimum information on:

- Stated expectations for highly disciplined behavior, self-control and restraint to minimize unnecessary contact with individuals.
- The basics about COVID-19
 - Symptoms: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting (this list does not include all possible symptoms). It is important to note that individuals can spread the infection even if they are symptom free.
 - How it is spread:
 - Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing, and talking
 - Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
 - COVID-19 may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
 - Personal Prevention Actions:
 - Stay home when you are sick (see employee protection above).
 - If you tested positive for COVID-19, but never had any symptoms, you must stay home until 10 days after the test was taken. If you develop symptoms, you need to follow the instructions above.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands before meals, after using the restroom and after coughing and sneezing.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and then dispose of the tissue and clean your hands immediately. If you do not have a tissue, use your elbow (not your hands).
 - Do not touch your mouth, eyes, nose with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoid sharing items such as phones or other devices. If devices must be shared be sure, to wipe them down with a disinfectant wipe before and after sharing.
 - Clean duty belts frequently with household cleaning spray or wipes as well as any other frequently touched objects that are used during the shift.
 - Wear a cloth face covering or surgical mask anytime you are within 6 feet of another individual that is not part of your household or living unit.
 - Launder uniforms daily and perform hand hygiene after removing the uniform and changing into street clothes.

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Crowd Control:

- Law enforcement personnel should wear appropriate personal protection equipment including cloth face coverings and face shields and should try to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others. If possible, formations used in crowd control should also aim to keep space between personnel and the public and should avoid forcing protesters into confined areas.
- The use of pepper spray, tear gas or other respiratory irritants should be avoided whenever possible because these can increase the risk for COVID-19 by making the respiratory tract more susceptible to infection, exacerbating any existing inflammation and induce coughing.

Arrests:

In the event that arrests are necessary due to violence or destruction of property.

- Law enforcement personnel should use disposable gloves if direct contact with an individual is necessary and should dispose of the gloves after contact and before touching another individual.
- Hands should be cleaned with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol before putting on and removing gloves.
- If the arrestee is visibly injured or appears ill standard procedures for medical services should be instituted.
- Zip ties or other disposable restraints should be used on the arrestee if restraint is necessary.
- If there is more than one arrestee they should be placed six feet apart while waiting for transport or booking.
- Avoid holding multiple people in confined spaces where they cannot maintain 6 feet of distance, including jails or vans whenever possible, since these are high-risk areas for COVID-19 transmission.
- If possible, duty belts and any objects that might have been in contact with others should be cleaned with a household spray or wipe.

Transport:

If arrestees must be transported off site for booking:

- Symptoms checks should be done on the arrestee prior to having them board the transport vehicle.
 - 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. Place a surgical mask on any symptomatic arrestees unless the arrestee has trouble breathing with the mask on.
- Arrestees should be seated in the vehicle so that they are not next to each other and can be separated by at least 6 feet if feasible. Ideally only one individual should be in a row and should not be directly in front of or behind the individual in the next row.
- Both passengers and drivers should be wearing a cloth face covering or surgical mask during the entire transport.
- If the arrestee was not wearing a mask or the mask has been damaged a new surgical mask should be provided to them before entering the vehicle. **It is important to note that individuals that report difficulty breathing while wearing the mask should be allowed to remove it.**

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- Maintain good ventilation. Avoid using recirculated air options while there are passengers in the vehicle; use the car's vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.
- Cleaning sprays, EPA registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, or disposable wipes, disposal trash bags and tissues should be kept in the vehicle in order to clean visibly dirty surfaces.
- Frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, steering wheels, gear shifts and radio/air conditioning/heating controls should be cleaned after every ride.

Booking:

At the booking site.

- Arrestees should be seated six feet apart while awaiting processing and asked to keep their cloth face coverings on.
- Tools needed during booking such as touch pads, fingerprinting devices, pens, etc. should be cleaned between uses.
- Arrestees should be offered hand sanitizer to use before and after the use of commonly touched surfaces.
- If the arrestee must be transported to a correctional and detention facility the guidelines noted in the transport section should be followed.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. 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
 - COVID-19 scams: ph.lacounty.gov/hccp/covidscams

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>