

Guidance for Homeless Service Settings during COVID-19

Clients and staff in homeless service settings are at risk for COVID-19 infections during community spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 outbreaks in this setting threaten provision of critical homeless services, as well as the health of staff and people experiencing homelessness. People experiencing homelessness may have underlying medical conditions that increase their risk of severe illness. Continued operation of homeless service settings is critical, and homeless service providers should have a COVID-19 response plan in place.

CDC provides guidance for homeless service providers on how to prevent and respond to COVID-19. The Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) recommends following CDC guidance for homeless service settings, along with several WA DOH guidance documents listed below regarding specific topics.

CDC Guidance

Please consult the following CDC guidance documents for recommendations:

Topic	Guidance Document
COVID-19 guidance for homeless services providers to lower the risk of COVID-19 spread and prepare for when someone has COVID-19	Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) CDC
COVID-19 guidance on people experiencing unsheltered homelessness	Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness COVID-19 CDC
COVID-19 testing guidance for homeless service settings	Interim Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Homeless Shelters and Encampments CDC
Guidance for screening clients for COVID-19 symptoms at homeless service sites	Screening Clients for COVID-19 at Homeless Shelters or Encampments CDC
General COVID-19 FAQs for homeless service providers	Homelessness and COVID-19 FAQs CDC
COVID-19 FAQs about vaccination for people experiencing homelessness	COVID-19 Vaccination for People Experiencing Homelessness: Frequently Asked Questions CDC
Guidance for health departments on how to implement COVID-19 vaccination for people experiencing homelessness	Interim Guidance for Health Departments: COVID-19 Vaccination Implementation for People Experiencing Homelessness CDC

Homeless service providers should maintain awareness of local health authority (often the [local health jurisdiction](#)) COVID-19 guidance and consult their local health authority for questions about preventing or responding to COVID-19 facility outbreaks, providing vaccination, offering testing, or other issues. Notify your local health authority if you suspect there is a COVID-19 outbreak in your homeless service setting (i.e., if there are two or more cases of COVID-19 within 14 days). Workplaces are required to notify their local health jurisdiction within 24 hours if the employer suspects COVID-19 is spreading in the workplace or if the employer is aware of 2 or more employees who develop confirmed or suspected COVID-19 within a 14-day period (Governor Proclamation 20-25 et seq. – currently [20-25.19](#)).

Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) Guidance

Please review the following guidance documents for Washington State-specific recommendations and requirements:

Topic	Guidance Document
COVID-19 guidance for businesses, organizations, and other non-health care workplaces – this includes links to Labor & Industries requirements for workplaces	Guidance for Non-Healthcare Businesses and Organizations during COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Mask recommendations and requirements for preventing and responding to COVID-19, including guidance specific to people in homeless service settings	Mask/Face Covering Guidance During COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Guidance for what to do if someone tests positive for COVID-19, including guidance specific to people in homeless service settings	What to do if you test positive for COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Guidance for what to do if someone is exposed to COVID-19, including guidance specific to people in homeless service settings	What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Ventilation guidance including how to increase effective air filtration and the intake of outdoor air	Ventilation and Air Quality for Reducing Transmission of COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Guidance on providing cooling for building occupants when air conditioning and HVAC systems are not available to provide a cool indoor environment	Creating Safer Air Movement for Cooling with Consideration of COVID-19 Washington State Department of Health
Guidance on cleaning and disinfecting to prevent COVID-19 infection	Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Public Spaces Washington State Department of Health

Additional Resources

Below are additional resources from WA DOH and CDC that homeless services providers might find useful:

Topic	Link
CDC guidance on different types of masks and respirators, including choosing a mask or respirator for different situations	Masks and Respirators CDC
WA DOH self-testing guidance for establishments, including how establishments can use self-tests with and without a medical test site license	Interim SARS-CoV-2 Self-Testing Guidance for Employers Washington State Department of Health
WA DOH testing resources	Resources and Recommendations Washington State Department of Health
WA DOH vaccination resources	COVID-19 Vaccine Washington State Department of Health
WA DOH information on reporting point of care test results	Reporting COVID-19 Test Results for Point-of-Care Testing Facilities Washington State Department of Health
Information on COVID-19 therapeutics (pre-exposure prophylaxis and treatment)	COVID-19 Therapeutics Washington State Department of Health

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share only accurate information to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions? Call our COVID-19 Information hotline: **1-800-525-0127**

Monday – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday and [observed state holidays](#), 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.