

Homeless Shelter and Service Provider Guide

What's inside this guide

Use these tools to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among clients, guests, staff and volunteers.

We will update materials as information and guidance changes.

- o [Checklist 1: Supplies, Equipment and Cleaning](#)
- o [Checklist 2: Protocols and Procedures](#)
- o [Checklist 3: Communication and Education](#)
- o [Checklist 4: Outreach](#)
- o [Tips for Staff and Volunteers](#)
- o [Tips for Clients and Guests](#)

Additional resources

Other resources online you can download and print:

- o [Temporary handwashing station fact sheet.](#)
- o [Clean and disinfect infographic.](#)
- o [COVID-19 infographic for people experiencing homelessness.](#)
- o [COVID-19 health and safety at home for essential workers.](#)
- o [Health screen guidelines for all facilities.](#)
- o [Handwashing signs.](#)
- o [Cough protection signs.](#)
- o [Personal protective equipment guidance.](#)
- o [Guidance for COVID-19 testing fact sheet.](#)

Partner resources

Find other helpful materials at:

Washington State Department of Health

doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

cdc.gov/coronavirus

Contacts

Health Department

Carrie Ching

cching@tpchd.org

(253) 961-6830

Pierce County Homelessness Response Team

Jeff Rodgers

jeff.rodgers@piercecountywa.gov

(253) 798-6908

Find more information at tpchd.org/coronavirus.

Supplies, Equipment and Cleaning Checklist

Item or task	To do	Doing	Done	N/A
Supplies and equipment				
Liquid hand soap and single-use paper towels at all handwashing sinks and stations.				
Cleaning products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims.				
Disinfectant labeled for control of hepatitis A.				
Hand sanitizer at entrance(s) and common areas.				
Hot running water (100-120°F) at sinks.				
First aid kit(s) with thermometers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check size and amount of supplies is correct for number of clients you serve. 				
Appropriate personal protective equipment for anyone responsible to clean and maintain facility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves, face mask, protective clothing, and eye protection. 				
Supplies for people with cold-like symptoms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tissues, toilet paper, re-sealable plastic bags, extra linens, towels, and blankets. 				
Supplies for makeshift barriers to isolate people with cold-like symptoms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheets, plastic shower curtains, twine, and nails. 				
6-8-week supply of non-perishable food. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask partners to store food if you don't have space. 				
Temporary handwashing stations.				
Sneeze guards at registration.				
Cleaning everywhere				
Line wastebaskets for used tissues and masks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff to use gloves when they pick up used tissues or empty waste baskets. 				
Clean and disinfect high contact surfaces frequently. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doorknobs, light switches, tabletops, phones, pens, shared bathrooms, keyboards, and countertops. 				
Wash eating utensils and dishes for people who aren't sick.				
Cleaning sleeping areas				
Disinfect sleeping areas and mats between each client.				
Use products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims to clean.				
Wash linens (bed sheets, towels, etc.) with laundry soap. Tumble dry on a hot setting.				
Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer right after handling dirty laundry.				

Resources:

- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration: COVID-19 Guidance for Preparing Workplaces.](#)
- [Public Health Seattle King County's Sanitation and Hygiene Guide for Homeless Service Providers.](#)
- [DOH - Interim Cleaning Recommendations for Facilities Housing Persons Under Quarantine for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\).](#)

Find more information at tpchd.org/coronavirus.

Protocols and Procedures

Checklist

Item or task	To do	Doing	Done	N/A
Health and safety				
Screen, isolate or refer ill clients to health care providers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See COVID-19 Health Screening Guidelines for All Facilities. 				
Set up proper physical distancing of 6 feet or more, if possible.				
Limit client movement and physical gathering.				
Train new staff and volunteers on sanitation and hygiene during onboarding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review King County's Sanitation & Hygiene Guide for homeless services providers. 				
Create specific protocols and schedules to handle and dispose infectious waste.				
Decide best conditions of entry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One entrance, handwashing, alcohol and drug use, etc. 				
Determine plans for access to smoking, drugs, or alcohol.				
Stress management, de-escalation and crisis prevention intervention.				
Monitor and manage compassion fatigue.				
Address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers for clients, staff and volunteers.				
Get input and support for your emergency operations and communication plans.				
Share plans with staff, volunteers, key community partners and stakeholders and solicit feedback.				
Develop training and educational materials about the plans for staff and volunteers.				
Staff and volunteer absence				
Develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review DOH's Workplace and Employer Resources and Recommendations. 				
Plan for increased staff and volunteer absenteeism caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illness. People who care for children or sick household member. Vulnerable populations who stay home. 				
Identify critical job functions and positions, and backup staff and volunteers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at telework options, extending shift hours and cross-training. Hire temporary employees and expand volunteer pools. Keep a list of temporary employment agencies. Get on local community volunteer listservs. Prepare job functions and position descriptions to share with partners. 				

Continued on next page.

Protocols and Procedures

Checklist (continued)

Item or task	To do	Doing	Done	N/A
Facilities with sleep areas				
Keep updated list of temporary expansion sites for physical distancing measures or where clients at risk of complications from COVID-19 can stay.				
Offer individual rooms for groups, families or clients at high risk of health complications, if possible.				
Set up head-to-toe sleeping arrangement with at least 6 feet between beds.				
Separate clients with fever, chills, or cough from high-risk clients.				
Designate a room and bathroom for clients with any mild illness, if possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none">If unable to separate them, group them together on opposite sides of the room.				
Create a bed map to identify and monitor specific clients.				
Develop strategies to handle aggressive, or non-cooperative clients. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow up with staff support after an incident.				
Review policies about access to visitors, common areas, snacks, and tobacco.				
After the pandemic				
When the pandemic is over review your COVID-19 plans and actions.				
Share key successes and challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss and note lessons learned.Talk over experiences with clients and staff.Talk about problems found in the plan and identify effective solutions.Identify additional resources needed.				
Participate in community discussions about emergency planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Let others know about what readiness actions worked.Maintain communication lines with nearby community residents and partners (e.g., social media and email lists).				
Continue to practice everyday preventive actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stay home when sick.Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.Wash hands often with soap and water.Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.				
Maintain and expand emergency planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for ways to expand community partnerships.Identify agencies or partners who can help prepare for future infectious disease outbreaks.				

View more recommendations in [CDC's Interim guidance for homeless service providers to plan and respond to coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

Find more information at tpchd.org/coronavirus.

Communication and Education

Checklist

Item or task	To do	Doing	Done	N/A
Share the COVID-19 infographic for people experiencing homelessness with staff, volunteers, guests and clients.				
Ask guests, clients, staff and volunteers to wash hands often. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post signs. 				
Ask clients with symptoms to wear a mask.				
Train staff in how to conserve masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance to conserve PPE. 				
Ask everyone to cover coughs with inner elbow, inside of shirt collar or tissues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post signs about cough protection. 				
Ask everyone to stay 6 feet away from each other unless they live together.				
Keep indoor air fresh and breathable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open doors and windows 2-3 times a day for 3-4 minutes, when possible. • Use facility's ventilating fans. Clean them monthly. Replace air filters. 				
Ask staff and volunteers to stay home if they are sick. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients, staff and volunteers should inform management if they have respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19. 				
Screen for symptoms upon entry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See COVID-19 Health Screening Guidelines for All Facilities. 				
Do your best to separate people with symptoms from healthy people.				
Offer a separate space to eat and rest if possible.				
Share COVID-19 Health & Safety at Home fact sheet with staff and volunteers.				

Outreach

Checklist

Item or task	To do	Doing	Done	N/A
Review organization's standard field safety protocol. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Public Health – Seattle & King County's Interim Guidance for How to Conduct Street Outreach Safely During COVID-19 Response for more COVID-19 recommendations. 				
Prioritize outreach events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit to essential and staff with experience, if possible. Don't carpool, if possible. 				
Create distance from clients and other staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold interactions outside, if possible. 				
Share COVID-19 Infographic for people experiencing homelessness information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep 6 feet between you and those who don't live with you. Ask clients to put on a mask if they have respiratory symptoms, chill or fever. Direct them to a separate, open space if possible. Ask guests and clients to cover coughs and sneezes. 				
Don't transport clients unless preapproved by management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff to use personal protective equipment. 				
Avoid touching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice alternative gestures to handshaking. 				
Avoid or limit sharing pens, clip boards, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry extra pens to give away. 				
Use gloves if you handle client items and IDs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands before and after you use gloves. 				
Wash your hands often.				
Sanitize supplies and common use items often. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car door handles, steering wheel, and seat belts. 				

Staff and Volunteers

Tips



Support sick or potentially sick employees.

Don't require a doctor's note from employees who have been sick.

Ask employees with COVID-19 symptoms to put on a mask and send them home.

- Have them contact their healthcare provider.
- See [Guidance for COVID-19 Testing](#) and [What to do if you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19](#).

Keep it confidential if an employee tests positive for COVID-19.

- See requirement by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).
- Inform close contacts of the sick employee they may have been close to someone with COVID-19.
- When needed, the Health Department provides specific guidance to organizations based on possible disease exposure risk.

Employees with a family member at home with COVID-19 should:

- Notify you.
- Stay home and avoid public places for 14 days.
- Monitor health for 14 days after the last day they had contact with the sick person.

Compassion fatigue and stress

Staff and volunteers often put the needs of other people before their own. But it is important to maintain good mental health to continue helping those in need.

Watch out for compassion fatigue symptoms:

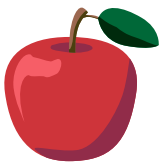
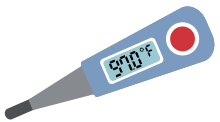
- Increased anger.
- Fear or hopelessness.
- Mood swings.
- Sleeplessness.
- Chronic exhaustion or physical ailments.
- Guilt.
- Avoiding work.
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances.

Encourage staff and volunteers to:

- Take breaks and limit shifts to no longer than 12 hours.
- Sleep 7-9 hours every night.
- Exercise and eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Talk to family, friends, supervisors and teammates.
- Pray, meditate, or practice other breathing or relaxation exercises.
- Set boundaries—practice saying “no”.
- Ask for help early.

Encourage staff and volunteers to talk about how they feel.

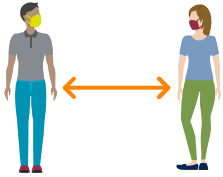
- Team members can share in the responsibility for their partner's safety and well-being.
- Develop a “buddy-check-in” system among staff and volunteers.



Find more information at tpchd.org/coronavirus.

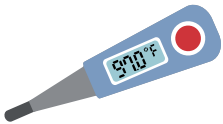
Clients and Guests

Tips



Limit risk during client services at all facilities.

- **Limit visitors.**
- **Limit in-person appointments, if possible.**
- **Avoid crowds.**
Increase distance between people to 6 feet, if possible.
- **Reduce interactions and gatherings, if possible.**
At meals, program activities, etc.
- **Encourage clients to report illnesses and COVID-19 exposure before or at entry.**
Reassure them you won't deny them and they won't lose a bed, when possible.
- **Give masks to anyone who coughs, sneezes or has a runny nose.**
- **Actively monitor clients and guests for COVID-19 symptoms.**
Use the [COVID-19 Infographic for people experiencing homelessness](#).



Does a client or guest have symptoms?

- **Ask them to put on a mask.**
Connect them to a healthcare provider. The provider will advise on next steps.
- **Do your best to isolate the person from others.**
- **Encourage frequent hand washing or hand sanitizer use.**
- **Limit their movement in the facility.**
Offer tissues, a plastic bag to put the used tissues in, and hand sanitizer to keep near them.
- **Encourage them to drink fluids, rest and sleep.**
- **Continue to monitor their health.**
Clients with mild symptoms could get worse. Refer to care if needed.



Where clients or guests with COVID-19 symptoms can stay.

- **Send clients who need emergency services to the emergency department.**
- **Refer clients waiting for test results or who have confirmed COVID-19 to assessment and recovery [Temporary Care Centers](#).**
Shelters and other congregate care facilities can call (253) 820-4684 between 8 a.m.-4 p.m. to discuss placement.

