

# COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Hair Salons and Barbershops

**July 29, 2020**

---

*All guidance should be implemented only with county health officer approval following their review of local epidemiological data including cases per 100,000 population, rate of test positivity, and local preparedness to support a health care surge, vulnerable populations, contact tracing, and testing.*

## OVERVIEW

On March 19, 2020, the State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health issued an order requiring most Californians to stay at home to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 among the population.

The impact of COVID-19 on the health of Californians is not yet fully known. Reported illness ranges from very mild (some people have no symptoms) to severe illness that may result in death. Certain groups, including people aged 65 or older and those with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk of hospitalization and serious complications. Transmission is most likely when people are in close contact or in a poorly ventilated area with an infected person, even if that person does not have any symptoms or has not yet developed symptoms.

Precise information about the number and rates of COVID-19 by industry or occupational groups, including among critical infrastructure workers, is not available at this time. There have been multiple outbreaks in a range of workplaces, indicating that workers are at risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19 infection. Examples of these workplaces include hospitals, long-term care facilities, prisons, food production, warehouses, meat processing plants, and grocery stores.

As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

Key prevention practices include:

- ✓ physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- ✓ use of face coverings by workers (where respiratory protection is not required) and customers/clients,
- ✓ frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- ✓ training workers on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention plan.

In addition, it will be critical to have in place appropriate processes to identify new cases of illness in workplaces and, when they are identified, to intervene quickly and work with public health authorities to halt the spread of the virus.

## PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for hair salons and barbershops to support a safe, clean environment for workers and customers. Hair salon or barbershop owners or operators must acknowledge that lessees should only resume operations when they are ready and able to implement the necessary safety measures to provide for their safety and that of their customers. The guidance is not intended to revoke or repeal any worker rights, either statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained and is not exhaustive, as it does not include county health orders, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA or the California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology.<sup>1</sup> Stay current on changes to

public health guidance and state/local orders, as the COVID-19 situation continues. Cal/OSHA has more comprehensive guidance on their [Cal/OSHA General Guidelines on Protecting Workers from COVID-19 webpage](#). CDC has additional requirements in their [guidance](#) for businesses and employers.

## Required Use of Face Coverings

On June 18, CDPH issued [Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings](#), which broadly requires the use of face coverings for both members of the public and workers in all public and workplace settings where there is a high risk of exposure.

People in California must wear face coverings when they are engaged in work, whether at the workplace or performing work off-site, when:

- Interacting in-person with any member of the public;
- Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;
- Working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;
- Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities;
- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present when unable to physically distance; or,
- Driving or operating any public transportation or paratransit vehicle, taxi, or private car service or ride-sharing vehicle when passengers are present. When no passengers are present, face coverings are strongly recommended.

Complete details, including all requirements and exemptions to these rules, can be found in the [guidance](#). Face coverings are strongly encouraged in other circumstances, and employers can implement additional face covering requirements in fulfilling their obligation to provide workers with a safe and healthful workplace. Employers must provide face coverings to workers or reimburse workers for the reasonable cost of obtaining them.

Employers should develop an accommodation policy for any worker who meets one of the exemptions from wearing a face covering. If a worker who would otherwise be required to wear a face covering because of frequent contact with others cannot wear one due to a medical condition, they should be provided with a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape attached to the bottom edge, if feasible, and if the medical condition permits it.

Businesses that are open to the public should be cognizant of the exemptions to wearing face coverings in the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#) and may not exclude

any member of the public for not wearing a face covering if that person is complying with the [guidance](#). Businesses will need to develop policies for handling these exemptions among customers, clients, visitors, and workers.



## Workplace Specific Plan

- Establish a written, workplace-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every location, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks, and designate a person at each facility to implement the plan.
- Incorporate the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#) into the Workplace Specific Plan and include a policy for handling exemptions.
- Identify contact information for the local health department where the facility is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among workers or customers.
- Train and communicate with workers and worker representatives on the plan and make the plan available to workers and their representatives.
- Regularly evaluate the facility for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
- Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#).
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected worker and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive worker(s) and close contacts.
- Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.



## Topics for Worker Training

- Information on [COVID-19](#), how to prevent it from spreading, and which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC Guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work:
  - If a worker has symptoms of COVID-19 as [described by the CDC](#), such as a 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, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea,  
OR

- If a worker was diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not yet been released from isolation, OR
- If, within the past 14 days, a worker has had contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is considered potentially infectious (i.e. still on isolation).
- To return to work after a worker receives a COVID-19 diagnosis only if 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, their symptoms have improved, and the worker has had no fevers (without the use of fever reducing medications) for the last 72 hours. A worker without symptoms who was diagnosed with COVID-19 can return to work only if 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive COVID-19 test.
- To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on [CDC's webpage](#).
- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol (preferred) or 70% isopropanol (if the product is inaccessible to unsupervised children) when workers cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per [CDC guidelines](#)).
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time (see Physical Distancing section below).
- Proper use of face coverings, including:
  - Face coverings do not protect the wearer and are not personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - Face coverings can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
  - Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.
  - Workers should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
  - Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Face coverings must not be shared and should be washed or discarded after each shift.
- Information contained in the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#), which mandates the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and

practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings. Training should also include the employer's policies on how people who are exempted from wearing a face covering will be handled.

- Ensure independent contractors, temporary, or contract workers are also properly trained in COVID-19 prevention policies and have necessary supplies and PPE. Discuss these responsibilities ahead of time with organizations supplying temporary and/or contract workers.
- Information on paid leave benefits the worker may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on [government programs supporting sick leave and workers' compensation for COVID-19](#), including workers' sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and workers' rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the Governor's [Executive Order N-62-20](#) while that Order is in effect.



## Individual Control Measures and Screening

- Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible.
- If requiring self-screening at home, which is an appropriate alternative to providing it at the establishment, ensure that screening was performed prior to the worker leaving the home for their shift and follows [CDC guidelines](#), as described in the Topics for Worker Training section above.
- Encourage workers and customers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Hair salon or barbershop operators must provide and ensure workers use all required protective equipment, including eye protection, face shields, and protective gloves when necessary.
- Hair salon or barbershop operators should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.
- Disposable gloves should be worn for services that require them (e.g. chemical hair services). Wearing gloves should be done in conjunction with regular hand washing and is not a substitute for regular hand washing.
- Workers should consider using glasses, goggles, or face shields in addition to face coverings during the provision of services, particularly during face

to face encounters.

- Contact customers before visits to confirm appointments and ask if they or someone in their household is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms. If the customer answers in the affirmative reschedule the appointment. Request customers to bring and use face coverings during the visit. If appropriate for the service, consider asking customers to come to the salon with their hair freshly cleaned in order to minimize time for the appointment. Customers should be asked not to bring children or others with them to the appointment.
- Customers should be screened upon arrival. Be prepared to cancel or reschedule customers who indicate they have any signs of illness.
- Display a set of guidelines for customers that are to be a condition of entry. The guidelines must include instructions to wear face coverings, use hand sanitizer, maintain physical distance from other customers, and they should communicate changes to service offerings. The guidelines should be posted in clearly visible locations, including at entrances, include pictograms, and be made available digitally (e.g. through email).



## Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- Coordinate with coworkers, fellow tenants, booth renters and/or workers and put a plan in place for cleaning at the beginning and end of each shift and in between customers. Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas, such as reception areas, and areas of ingress and egress including stairways, stairwells, and handrails.
- Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces including credit card terminals, counters, reception area seating, door handles, light switches, phones, toilets, and handwashing facilities.
- Encourage the use of credit cards and contactless payment systems. If electronic or card payment is not possible, customers should come with exact cash payment or check.
- Consider upgrading to touchless faucets, soap and paper towel dispensers, and adding touchless, automatic hand sanitizer dispensers. Remove any unnecessary products that do not belong in the restroom,
- e.g. candles or beauty supplies, and ensure soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers are regularly filled.
- To minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
- Amenities, including magazines, books, coffee, water, self-serve stations



(unless touchless), and other items for customers, must be removed from reception areas to help reduce touch points and customer interactions.

- Equip reception areas and workstations with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.
- Thoroughly clean any product display areas, including all shelving and display cases. Remove and discard any open “test” products and discontinue this practice to help reduce contamination. Add signage to this area to let customers know it is cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Workstations must be routinely and frequently cleaned, including between each customer appointment. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the station counters, rolling carts, drawers, hand mirrors, hair care and other products, and containers and provide a new smock or cape for each customer.
- Clean and disinfect shears by removing all visible debris, clean with soap and water, and wipe or spray with an EPA-registered disinfectant that demonstrates bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal activity and is approved for COVID-19.
- Clean and disinfect all non-electrical tools by removing all visible debris, cleaning with soap and water, drying the tools, and then completely immersing them in an EPA registered disinfectant. Tools should be sprayed or submerged and left to set for the full amount of time required by the disinfectant's manufacturer. Immersed items, like combs or brushes, should be removed at the end of contact time, rinsed, and dried with a paper towel or clean, freshly laundered towel.
- Clean all electrical tools, such as clippers, by removing all visible debris and disinfecting with an EPA-registered disinfectant spray or wipe that demonstrates bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal activity and is approved for COVID-19.
- Clean and disinfect all handles, hoses, spray nozzles, and other equipment before and after use on a customer. Chairs, headrests, shampoo bowls, and other items should also be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized between each use.
- Where appropriate, consider adding a paper cover, sheet, or clean towel that can be easily disposed of or cleaned for use between customers.
- All single use items, such as disposable wax collars, cotton, neck strips, and applicators, must be used once and immediately thrown away. Product samples, including make-up, must not be used at any time.
- All dirty linens, including towels, smocks, and reusable capes, should be placed in a closed container and not used again until properly laundered either by a commercial laundering service or a laundering process which includes immersion in water of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit for at least

25 minutes. Store all clean linens in a clean, covered place. Ensure workers who handle dirty linens or laundry wear gloves.

- Where possible, do not clean floors by sweeping or other methods that can disperse pathogens into the air. Vacuum wherever possible and use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the worker's job duties.
- When choosing disinfecting chemicals, hair salon or barbershop operators should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. Provide workers training on the chemical hazards, manufacturer's directions, ventilation requirements, and Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use. Workers using cleaners or disinfectants should wear gloves and other protective equipment as required by the product. Follow the [asthma-safer cleaning methods](#) recommended by the California Department of Public Health and ensure proper ventilation.
- Hair salon or barbershop workers should avoid sharing phones, tablets, laptops, desks, pens, other work supplies, wherever possible. Never share PPE.
- Discontinue the use of shared food and beverage equipment in breakrooms (including shared coffee brewers).
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.
- In addition to the above cleaning and disinfecting protocols, hair salons, barbershops, and other cosmetology businesses must follow the existing [California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology rules](#).



## Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between and among workers and customers, except when providing haircutting and other close contact services. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where workers and/or customers should stand).

- Take measures at reception desks or other areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained to minimize exposure between workers and customers, such as Plexiglas or other barriers.
- Consider offering workers who request modified duties options that minimize their contact with customers and other workers (e.g., managing inventory or managing administrative needs through telework).
- Stagger appointments to reduce reception congestion and ensure adequate time for proper cleaning and sanitation between each customer visit. Consider servicing fewer customers each day or expanding operating hours to allow for more time between customers. Suspend walk-in appointment availability.
- If possible, implement virtual check-in technology to ensure that workers are notified when a customer arrives. Ask customers to wait outside or in their cars rather than congregating in the salon or barbershop. In larger locations, reception areas should only have one customer at a time or modify the area for adequate physical distancing, including removing chairs and sofas.
- Wherever possible, doors should be left open if they do not open and close automatically.
- Require workers to avoid handshakes, hugs, or similar greetings that break physical distance.
- Discourage workers from congregating in high traffic areas, such as bathrooms, hallways, or credit card terminals.
- Close breakrooms, use barriers, or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate workers and discourage congregating during breaks. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.
- Adjust any staff meetings to ensure physical distancing. Hold meetings over the phone or via webinar for workers wherever possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. Hair salons and barbershops must comply with all [Cal/OSHA](#) standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#). Additionally, employers should be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.

