



Guidance for Service Providers

March 9, 2020

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has announced the first case of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) detected in Marion County. The patient had no previous contact with a confirmed case and it is suspected of being community acquired. In keeping with confidentiality guidelines, OHA is not releasing additional information.

Marion County Health and Human Services has an important role in responding to any reports of COVID-19 in our community. Currently, public health is investigating the patient's contacts and ensuring that our community remains protected.

Congregate settings like day or overnight shelters provide vital spaces for unhoused members of the community to rest and sleep, get a meal and find connection. We also recognize that people without permanent shelter who have medical conditions, substance use or mental health challenges exacerbated by homelessness, or those who simply don't have ready and adequate access to hygiene facilities, may be particularly vulnerable to communicable diseases.

Following these steps can help protect those accessing congregate settings and minimize the chance of introducing or spreading communicable diseases like COVID-19 in shelters.

PREPARING YOUR SHELTER OR FACILITY

Making precautionary adjustments to shelter facilities and operations can help prevent the introduction or spread of COVID-19 in these congregate settings.

Bed spacing

The COVID-19 virus is most likely to be transmitted to someone within six feet of a person carrying it. We acknowledge that most shelters cannot create six feet of spacing between each bed, and that guests interact closely in dining, restroom and other common areas.

The goal, then, is to separate individuals with possible respiratory illness symptoms (e.g., coughing, fever, shortness of breath) from those not displaying those symptoms. Attempt to maintain a six-foot separation between coughing guests and the non-coughing guests in sleeping areas.

Meals, restrooms and other common areas

Individuals with known respiratory symptoms should eat with maximum spacing from others and in an area with maximum ventilation, including outside if weather permitting, or by being offered meals "to go."

Be diligent in following hygiene and food safety rules about keeping food covered, having designated individuals serve when possible, not using personal utensils in shared containers, washing hands before eating and handling shared objects, and cleaning kitchen surfaces and dining areas between use.

Where space allows, follow bed-spacing guidelines to maintain daytime common area space separation for coughing guests and non-coughing guests.

Cleaning and disinfecting

Increase frequency of your routine cleaning and disinfection program to the extent feasible. Emphasize cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces like bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

Special cleaning procedures and products are not necessary as long as there are standard procedures for cleaning and disinfecting with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant with a claim for human coronaviruses.

SUPPORTING HAND AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

Coughs and sneezes

- Post signage about proper cough and sneeze etiquette in kitchens, bathrooms and common areas. Visit the [CDC website](#) for printable posters.
- Make tissues available with trash cans and hand hygiene options nearby.
- Ensure that any sink is well-stocked with soap and paper towels.

Hand sanitizer and/or hand washing

The most important measure for preventing the spread of pathogens is effective hand hygiene.

- Remind all staff, volunteers, guests and visitors to clean their hands according to CDC guidelines.
- Washing hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds is the preferred way to sanitize hands.
- Make hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol) available near points of entry.
- Post signage, verbally cue people and have staff model good hand washing/sanitizing behavior.
- Make sure that you have adequate supplies for good hand hygiene, including clean and functional hand washing stations, soap, paper towels, trash receptacles and alcohol-based sanitizer.

OHA has comprehensive information on their website including fact sheets and information about the number of persons under monitoring or investigation. You may also [sign-up for regular email updates](#) to keep informed of the latest developments in Oregon.

Please visit the Marion County [Health and Human Services website](#) for additional information and links to both OHA and the CDC. For general information about the novel coronavirus, please call 2-1-1.