Interim Guidance: Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Community Congregate Living Settings for Those Who are Housed In Private Rooms

March 11, 2020

AUDIENCE: The following interim guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by staff and residents living in community congregate living settings where individuals and households are living in their separate room and there may be sharing of bathrooms or cooking facilities between households. A household is all the people who may live in an independent enclosed space. This includes:

- Single resident occupancy hotels (SROs)
- Permanent supportive housing (PSH)
- Shelter or transitional housing with private rooms

For the purposes of this guidance, this does NOT include: adult homeless shelters or navigation centers (for which guidance can be found here), 24 hour drop in centers, residential care facilities for the elderly (RFCEs, including Board and Care), residential mental health or substance use disorder treatment program, medical respite, or long-term care facilities (for which guidance can be found here).

This guidance and the others referred to above can be found online at http://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19

BACKGROUND:

Novel coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory disease that can spread from person to person. Most people who get the infection have no symptoms or mild symptoms of a cold. Some people have gotten very sick from it and need to be hospitalized – especially people who are older and have chronic medical conditions like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and weakened immune systems. The most common signs and symptoms of infection include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscles aches, sore throat, headache. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea are less common symptoms of COVID-19 infection. At present, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 and no treatment after someone has been exposed to COVID-19. The best way to prevent the spread of the virus is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

GUIDANCE FOR RESIDENTS:

Although the risk of getting COVID-19 is currently low, there are many cold or flu infections you can get which can look just like COVID-19 and will make it hard to take care of your daily activities.

Practice everyday preventive actions that can help prevent the spread of germs:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, under the neck of your shirt, or into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are
not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol. Always wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

- If you have symptoms of a cold or flu (such as cough, runny nose, sore throat, etc), wear a face mask when you are around other people.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water.
- Get your flu shot to protect against flu which has symptoms similar to COVID-19.

Prepare for the possible disruption caused by an outbreak:

- Make sure you have a supply of all essential medications for your family. Ask your provider or pharmacy to give you several months supply of medications, if possible, to reduce the number of times you have to go to a pharmacy;
- If you care for a child, make a child care plan if you or a care giver are sick;
- Make arrangements about how your family will manage a school closure; and
- Make a plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.

When working with service providers (such as home health aides, IHSS, social workers, case managers):

- If you have symptoms of a cold or flu, please wear a mask when seeing service providers.
- If you notice a service provider has symptoms of cold or flu, ask them to wear a mask before seeing you.

If you have symptoms of a cold or flu or if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community, limit your interactions with others.

- Stay at home and in your room as much as is possible.
- Avoid spending time in community lounges and other common spaces in your building.
- Limit visitors.
- As much as is possible, avoid going to public places where close contact with others might occur, such as:
  - Shopping centers
  - Movie theaters
  - Stadium
  - Libraries
  - Community centers
  - Public transportation. If you need to take public transportation and you have symptoms of a cold or flu, please wear a mask. You can ask your facility manager or healthcare provider for a mask.
  - Group meals and food pantries. If you rely on these for food and you have symptoms of a cold or flu, please wear a mask if one is available.
GUIDANCE FOR CONGREGATE LIVING FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND STAFF:

Stay up to date with local and state COVID-19 activity and developments (in addition to CDC):

- https://www.sfdph.org Up to date information on COVID-19 and whether there is an outbreak in San Francisco will be posted here.
- https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19 Answers to frequently asked questions.

For detailed mandated cleaning instructions, see “Order of the Health Officer No. C19-04” which sets forth “Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards for Business, Schools, and SRO Settings” that Residential Hotels must fully and immediately comply with. See the following:


Provide education for staff and clients:

Place signs that encourage cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick (English) (Simplified Chinese) (Spanish), at the entrance to your building and in other areas where they are likely to be seen such as:

- Gathering areas
- Dining areas
- Bathrooms
- Staff lounges

Train employees and residents to clean their hands often with an ethanol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% ethanol or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water are preferred if hands are visibly dirty.

Provide hygiene and prevention materials:

- Provide easy access to soap, water, hand drying resources, and ethanol-based hand rubs at:
  - All entries
  - Dining areas
  - Shared bathrooms
  - Kitchen areas
  - Public phones
  - Computer stations
  - Elevators
  - By the doors of community rooms
  - By the bedsides of ill individuals
• Encourage the use of and distribute disposable face masks to any resident with a cough or other cold or flu-like symptoms. Staff with cold or flu-like symptoms should be encouraged to stay home.
  o If someone is coughing or sneezing, have them wear a disposable face mask when they are within 6 feet of other people
  o Change the mask if it gets saturated
  o Wash hands after changing mask

Ensure that adequate supplies are present and maintained:
• Hot and cold running water. Hot water should be maintained at 100°F. If temperature control is automatic, ensure that it does not exceed 120°F
• Liquid hand soap
• Paper hand towels
• Ethanol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% ethanol
• Facial tissues—place at entrances and community areas
• Plastic-lined wastebaskets—place at entrances and community areas
• Disposable surgical masks
  o For clients who are coughing or sneezing
  o For staff working closely with sick clients
• Gloves in a variety of sizes (for staff)
• Disposable gowns (for staff)
• Signs addressing hygiene (English) (Simplified Chinese) (Spanish)
• Disposable wipes for staff to clean surfaces

Remind staff members to use Standard Precautions.
• Remind staff who provide care for residents to use Standard Precautions for any interactions that require potential contact with body fluids with particular emphasis on hand hygiene. Standard Precautions include:
  o Wearing gloves if hand contact with blood, body fluids, respiratory secretions or potentially contaminated surfaces is expected.
  o Wearing a disposable gown if clothes might become soiled with blood, body fluids or respiratory secretions.
  o Wearing a mask if respiratory secretions are expected to contact mouth and nose.
  o Changing gloves and gowns after each encounter and washing hands or use alcohol hand sanitizer immediately after removing gloves.
  o Washing hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with respiratory secretions.

Update your master cleaning schedule and instructions
• For detailed mandated cleaning instructions, see “Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards for Business, Schools, and SRO Settings” that was referenced above:
• Train staff in how to mix and use disinfectants and sanitizer solutions.
  o Follow all label instructions
  o Use damp cleaning methods. Dry dusting or sweeping can cause airborne virus droplets.
  o Change mop heads, rags, and other cleaning items frequently
• Provide staff with gloves for cleaning
• Wipe down commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) before each use with disposable wipes.
• Clean all common areas at least daily; clean heavily used surfaces more frequently (e.g. doorknobs, elevator buttons, public phones, banisters, tabletops, handrails, workstations, and countertops)
• Empty trash receptacles frequently
• Clean toys daily, and discourage sharing of plush toys (such as teddy bears) between children
• Regularly clean air vents and replace filters, especially on air purifiers (like HEPA filters)
• No special disinfection products are required.

**Encourage all staff and clients to get the influenza vaccine to prevent illness that is similar to COVID-19.**

**Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.**

• Staff with cold or flu-like illness should not work until 24 hours after fever and other symptoms have gone.
• Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of infection.
• Do not require a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick with cold or flu-like illness to return to work, as healthcare provider offices may not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
• Staff developing cold or flu-like symptoms while at work should immediately don a facemask, notify management, and leave work.

**Offer masks to sick residents.** Offer residents who have cold or flu-like symptoms to wear a mask when they leave their room.

• Please note many residents may have chronic coughs that do not indicate they have a new infectious illness. Residents with chronic, non-infectious coughs do not need to wear a mask.
• Many residents may have lung diseases that prevent them from wearing a mask. Do not require or force residents to wear masks.
  o **If a client refuses to or is unable to wear a mask:**
    - Have staff members wear masks when interacting with the ill resident.
    - Offer ill residents to eat at a different time or in an area separated from others.
- Improve ventilation in the room/floor to the extent possible
- If within the purview of your duties,
  - Cancel the ill person’s nonessential appointments at other agencies, group sessions, etc.
  - If the client has medically necessary appointments, such as dialysis or chemotherapy, the sending facility should fill out a Medical Facility Communication Sheet; call the receiving facility ahead of time to notify them of the patient’s infectious status and the patient should wear a facemask during transfer and his/her entire visit.
  - Limit the number of staff/visitors who enter the ill resident’s room. Staff/visitors should be instructed on how to wear a facemask and how to perform hand hygiene and other universal precautions

For residents who have confirmed COVID-19 infection and their close contacts. The San Francisco Department of Public Health, in partnership with the city’s Emergency Operations Center and other city agencies, will explore alternative housing, food, and transportation services for residents who have confirmed COVID-19 and their close contacts to help protect the community’s health.

To reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 cases:

- **Restrict ill visitors.** Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors not to visit if they have symptoms of cold or flu such as fever, cough, runny nose, difficulty breathing, etc.

- **Mealtimes**
  - If feasible, stagger mealtimes to reduce crowding in shared eating facilities.
  - Stagger the schedule for use of kitchens

- **Food and Cooking Facilities:**
  - Clean shared cooking facilities at least weekly.
  - To the extent possible that is legally allowed by your building codes, allow residents to have in-unit cooking devices such as microwaves and hot plates.

- **Bathrooms**
  - Clean shared bathrooms at least weekly.
  - If feasible, stagger bathroom schedule to reduce the number of people using the facilities at the same time.
  - If feasible, have one designated bathroom for ill persons (if possible, designate a bathroom close to their rooms/beds)

- **Recreation/Common Areas/Group Activities**
  - Create a schedule for using common spaces.
  - Hold fewer large group activities such as “house meetings” in favor of smaller groups.
○ Consider cancelling group activities.

• **Transport**
  ○ Transport fewer people per trip so passengers don’t sit too close together.

• **Staff activities**
  ○ Don’t hold large meetings when information can be communicated in other ways.
  ○ Consider conference calls instead of in-person meetings
ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. C19-04
DATE ORDER ISSUED: MARCH 10, 2020

Please read this order carefully. Violation of or failure to comply with this order constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. (Cal. Health & Safety C. §§ 120295 et seq.)

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO (“HEALTH OFFICER”) HEREBY ORDERS:

1. Effective as of the date of this Order, and for the limited duration specified in Section 8 below, Owners and/or Operators of each and every Residential Hotel, as those terms are used and defined in San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 41, must fully and immediately comply with Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards set forth in Attachment A to this Order. This Order applies only to common areas of Residential Hotels including, but not limited to, shared bathrooms, kitchens, common rooms, lobbies, hallways, and doorways.

2. “Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards” means minimum standards for sanitation and hygiene procedures as described in the San Francisco Department of Public Health COVID-19 Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards for Business, School, and SRO Settings (March 9, 2020), a copy of which is attached to this Order as Attachment A and incorporated by reference. A current copy of the Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards will be available on the San Francisco Department of Public Health website located at: https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp

3. The Health Officer may amend or update the Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards from time to time by amending or updating its website. It is the responsibility of every Owner and Operator of a Residential Hotel to conduct daily checks of this website to confirm that no changes or amendments to the Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards have been made.

4. Residential Hotel Owners and Operators are responsible for maintaining a compliance log containing, at minimum, a description of the date and time of cleaning, areas cleaned, and the initials of the person or persons who conducted the cleaning. Owners and Operators of Residential Hotels must immediately produce the compliance log upon demand from the Health Officer or their designee.

5. Residential Hotel Owners and Operators are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that any employees and/or contractors implementing Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards are properly trained and equipped to safely conduct cleaning duties in order minimize COVID-19 exposure risk.

Order Enhancing Sanitation (H&S 101040, 101085, 120175) rev. March 2020
6. This Order is based on scientific evidence and best practices currently known and available. This Order is intended to prevent the spread of the virus that causes Coronavirus 2019 Disease ("COVID-19") to and among the residents of Residential Hotels and to protect those residents from avoidable risk of serious illness or death resulting from COVID-19. A high percentage of Residential Hotel residents are sixty years of age or older, experience serious health complications, or both. Recent epidemiologic studies show that many Residential Hotel residents suffer from respiratory, cardiac, immunity, and other serious health complications. Many Residential Hotels contain environmental problems such as mold growth, poor sanitation, broken plumbing, and poor ventilation. Taken together, these factors place many Residential Hotel residents at high risk of experiencing serious health complications from COVID-19, including death. Application of Minimum Environmental Cleaning Standards will decrease the probability of contact with the COVID-19 virus while also improving environmental conditions affecting respiratory health.

7. This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the February 25, 2020 Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency issued by Mayor London Breed, and the March 6, 2020 Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) issued by the Health Officer.

8. This Order will be effective until 11:59 p.m. on April 21, 2020, or until it is earlier rescinded, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer or by the California Public Health Officer, in writing. This Order may be extended for the protection of Residential Hotel residents based on conditions at that time.

9. Immediately upon receiving this Order and for the duration of the Order’s effectiveness, Residential Hotel Owners and Operators must provide notice of the Order in all of the following ways: (1) post this Order on the Residential Hotel website (if any); (2) post this Order on any common message boards in the Residential Hotel; (3) post this Order at all entrances to the Residential Hotel; and (4) provide this Order to each Residential Hotel resident.

IT IS SO ORDERED:

[Signature]

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH,
Health Officer of the
City and County of San Francisco

Date: 3/10/2020

The Order Served in Person:

By: ____________________________

(Date Served)
This guidance provides confirmation of the cleaning and disinfection standards for rooms or common areas of those with suspected or with confirmed COVID-19 have visited. It is aimed at limiting the survival of novel coronavirus in key environments. These recommendations will be updated if additional information becomes available.

**Intended audience**: These guidelines are focused on community, non-healthcare facilities (e.g., schools, institutions of higher education, offices, daycare centers, businesses, community centers) that do and do not house persons overnight.

**How does the COVID-19 spread?**
The virus spreads from person-to-person through close contact (within about 6 feet).

**Can COVID-19 spread by contaminated surfaces?**
There is still so much to learn about the virus, but the spreading of the virus from surfaces to people has not been documented yet. Current evidence suggests that the virus may remain infectious for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials.

**How can I clean to protect myself and others?**
Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks) with household cleaners. Clean on a daily basis, increasing frequency if surfaces are found to be dirty during spot-checks performed throughout the day.

Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

**Is it necessary to use a disinfectant?**
If surfaces are dirty, clean them first using a detergent and water and then disinfect them.

**Which types of disinfectants will kill the COVID-19?**
A list of products suitable for use against COVID-19, prepared by the American Chemistry Council’s Center for Biocide Chemistries is attached. It is not complete or exhaustive; any disinfectant which the manufacturer states meets the EPA’s Emerging Viral Pathogens (EVP) requirement can be used. Manufacturer’s statements are most commonly found on the manufacturer’s website or in letters issued by the manufacturer. When no such products are available, a dilute household bleach solution can be made from:
- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach added to one gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach added to one quart of water

**Are there any precautions I should take when using disinfectants?**
1. Make sure there is good ventilation during the use of the product when cleaning. Open available windows or doors to the outside.
2. Always use disinfectants according to the label instructions.
3. Use the safety equipment specified on the label.
4. Even if not required by the label wear gloves.
   a. Fresh disposable gloves should be used for cleaning. Gloves should be changed immediately after using disinfectants. Do not attempt to reuse disposable gloves.
   b. Clean the outside of reusable gloves immediately after using disinfectants. You can use your disinfectant to clean the gloves.

Always wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves. If running water is not available use hand
sanitizer.

5. Wear eye protection (goggles or safety glasses) if spraying cleaning chemicals above shoulder height.
6. For concentrated products requiring dilution, do not use more of the product than is specified on the label. Using more product does not improve cleaning, but it may cause problems for the user and room occupants. Make sure there is good ventilation during the use of the product.
7. Do not use alcohol for cleaning, it is a fire hazard.

AT FACILITIES THAT HOUSE PEOPLE OVERNIGHT, including Single Resident Occupancy Hotels:
- Every communal sink shall be equipped with soap.
- Every communal gathering area shall be equipped with hand sanitizer when available.
- Follow Interim Guidance for US Institutions of Higher Education on working with state and local health officials to isolate ill persons and provide temporary housing as needed.
- It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- In areas where ill persons are being housed in isolation. This includes focusing on cleaning and disinfecting common areas where staff/others providing services may come into contact with ill persons, but reducing cleaning and disinfection of bedrooms/bathrooms used by ill persons to as needed.
- In areas where ill persons have visited or used, continue routine cleaning and disinfection as in this guidance.

Surfaces
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, see “Which types of disinfectants will kill the COVID-19?” above.
  - For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
    - If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
    - Otherwise, use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claim that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry
- Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people’s items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

Trash:
- Wear gloves.
- Only handle trash bags by their empty upper sections. Do not hold the trash bag against your body.
- Tie the trash bag off before placing it into the conventional (municipal) waste.

Safety:
- Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash. If there is the possibility of body contact with an infected person or contaminated surfaces, gowns or disposable suits should be worn.
- Gloves and protective garments should be removed carefully inside out to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to clean hands after removing gloves.
- Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
ATTACHMENT A

- Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%-95% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Additional key times to clean hands include:
  - After blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After using the restroom
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - After contact with animals or pets
  - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child)

Resources:

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations - Interim Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus (March 6, 2020)

Interim Guidance for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019.

Interim Guidance for US Institutions of Higher Education