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Individual Steps to Reduce Risk of COVID-19 in California State Facilities

As California moves ahead with a phased re-opening and more people return to the workplace, there is an increased risk of spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. This guidance outlines the steps to be taken by individuals in California state facilities to create a safer environment for state employees, other workers, and members of the public.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread most easily when a person who is infected with the virus speaks, sneezes, coughs, or engages in other droplet-producing activity when in close (particularly within 6 feet) contact with another person. It is also possible that a person could become infected by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. It is now understood that an infected person without symptoms can spread the virus to others, which is called asymptomatic transmission.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The most effective interventions against COVID-19 are those that curb the community spread of the virus in the first place. The best way for an individual to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. An individual can reduce the probability of becoming infected by practicing frequent hand hygiene; avoiding touching one's face, eyes, nose, and mouth, especially with unwashed hands; avoiding known sources of infection (such as people who are currently known to be sick); practicing physical distancing; and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects. More information is available from the California Department of Public Health at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>.

Wearing cloth face coverings when in the vicinity of others is another step that individuals can take to curb the spread of the virus. This is thought to be particularly effective at inhibiting asymptomatic transmission of the virus by people who are infected but not exhibiting symptoms. In this light, if most or all members of a community wear cloth face coverings when in public, it is believed that community transmission of the virus will be reduced. Cloth face coverings have not been demonstrated to offer significant protection to an individual wearer, and should not be considered personal protective



equipment. Cloth face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand hygiene.

On June 18, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released updated [Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings](#) which 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. Complete details, including all requirements and certain exceptions, can be found in the guidance.

Below are specific steps for state employees, other workers, and members of the public in state facilities to reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. These steps shall be followed in all state facilities, rather than any applicable local guidance.

State Employees and Other Workers in State Facilities

To create a safer workplace for all:

- Face coverings must be worn by employees in accordance with the CDPH Guidance while 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 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;
 - Waiting for or riding on public transportation or in a for-hire vehicle, or in a vehicle during work-related travel with others; or
 - While outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a 6-foot physical distance from others is not feasible.
- Whenever face coverings are required, employers should provide them to employees or reimburse employees for the reasonable cost of obtaining them.
- Employers must take reasonable measures to remind workers that they should use face coverings.
- Employees must be trained on the proper use of face coverings, including:
 - Face coverings can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing.

- Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Face coverings must not be shared.
- Face coverings should be washed after each shift.
- The CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings, which mandates the circumstances in which face coverings be worn and the exceptions to when they must be worn, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings.

The CDPH guidance allows some individuals to be exempt from wearing a face covering. These exemptions include:

- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- Persons who are hearing impaired or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired; and
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work.

Employers must develop a policy for handling situations involving employees who may be exempt from wearing a face covering under the provisions of the CDPH guidance. If an employee 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.

State employees and other workers should be instructed to NEVER approach coworkers or members of the public who are not wearing a face covering, for the purpose of attempting to enforce any face-covering recommendation or requirement. In these instances, employees should maintain at least a 6-foot distance from others and raise any concerns to their supervisor. As noted above, some individuals may have legitimate reasons why they cannot wear a face covering. Supervisors should discuss any concerns with Human Resources personnel for guidance on handling these situations.

State employees and other workers should continue to follow other recommended steps to curb the spread of COVID-19, such as:

- Avoid entering state facilities (or other public spaces) and contact their supervisor if they have been diagnosed with COVID 19, or have a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 (chills, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, body or muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, loss of appetite, or diarrhea).
- If symptomatic, consult with their healthcare provider to see if they need to be tested for COVID-19 or require other medical intervention, and do not return to work until cleared by their health care provider.

- Avoid entering state facilities (or other public spaces) and contact their supervisor if they have been exposed to someone (such as in a household) suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Participate in any medical screening (such as temperature and/or symptom checks) that may be required at the facility.
- Maintain at least a 6-foot distance from others at all times.
- Avoid congregating in common areas and high-traffic areas.
- Avoid shaking hands or engaging in unnecessary physical contact as this would violate the required physical distancing of six feet.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Sneeze and cough into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into their elbow (not into their hands).
- Practice frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Follow the facility's cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Cooperate with any investigations of potential COVID-19 in the facility, if requested.
- Follow instructions on self-quarantining and self-monitoring for symptoms, if identified as a close contact of an infected person in the workplace or if otherwise directed to self-quarantine and self-monitor.

Members of the Public in State Facilities

To gain access to a state facility, members of the public must:

- Not have a current or recent diagnosis of COVID-19, not have fever or symptoms of COVID-19 (chills, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, body or muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, loss of appetite, or diarrhea), and not have been currently or recently exposed to someone (such as in a household) confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Participate in any fever and/or symptom screening required at the facility.
- Maintain at least a 6-foot distance from others at all times.
- Follow facility guidance regarding hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

In addition, members of the public must:

- Wear a clean cloth face covering when in the facility, in accordance with the CDPH guidance.
- Follow any applicable local health officer orders in place for the public.

Managers of state facilities should inform state workers and members of the public about the above public health protection practices through clearly visible signage, pictograms, website notices, etc. They should plan ahead for how to most safely handle members of the public who are not compliant with these practices. It should be noted that some individuals may have legitimate reasons why they cannot wear a face covering.