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The Division of Occupational Safety & Health (Cal/OSHA) at California's Department of Industrial Relations adopted emergency temporary [standards](#) for COVID-19 prevention and response, effective November 30, 2020.

Departments have already implemented many of the standards as a result of previous guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and CalHR. Key provisions of the standards that may not be part of departments' current practices are highlighted below. In addition, here are links to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and a [Fact Sheet](#) about the standards.

Departments should review CalOSHA's [Model COVID Prevention Program](#) to ensure, to the extent feasible, the temporary standards are part of their current written plan to prevent and respond to Covid-19.

For Departments subject to California's Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard ([CCR section 5199](#)), the new temporary standards do not apply to employees identified in your Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Exposure Control Plan.

To ensure a safe work environment for employees, departments should continually assess workplace risk and make adjustments when needed to ensure employee safety.

COVID-19 Communication

Department COVID-19 Prevention Programs must clearly communicate procedures for reporting exposures and hazards, requesting reasonable accommodations, and accessing testing when necessary.

Reporting positive COVID-19 cases and potential exposure in the workplace should ensure the confidentiality of employees. When providing this information, if there are fewer than 11 cases to report, departments should not identify the actual number of cases by saying "there are two cases" or "there are four cases" but instead say there are "fewer than 11 cases." If there are more than 11 cases, you may provide the specific number.

In implementing these standards, departments should coordinate with their labor relations office to ensure that any changes made are consistent with existing labor agreements and that appropriate, timely notice to employee representatives is made.

Face Coverings

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recently updated requirements for the use of face coverings by Californians. The full guidance can be found [here](#). Face coverings are currently required in all state buildings, but many departments allow employees to remove them once seated at their desk. Under the new requirements, face coverings can only be removed while sitting alone in a room or for other reasons described in the guidance. Face coverings must be worn in open cubicles.

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) can assist departments in accessing face coverings and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the state's stockpile. To initiate the process of obtaining access to Salesforce for electronic PPE resource requests, you must request a Salesforce account from Cal OES by visiting the [Salesforce Login](#) portal and self-registering. This account is at no cost to the agency. Once registered, the account request will be sent for approval to Cal OES. Please ensure that you use Google Chrome or Firefox for all Salesforce activities.

Once a department receives approval from Cal OES, they will have the ability to create requests and will be provided a tracking number to view the status of their request.

COVID-19 Testing

The standards require that employers must provide testing to all employees in an "exposed workplace" when there are three or more COVID-19 cases in a 14-day period. An "exposed workplace" is not the entire building or department, but the area of the building where the COVID-19 cases were present.

Departments should consult with local public health departments regarding potential outbreaks. Departments with more extensive testing protocols in place or those subject to other safety standards should continue to follow industry-specific guidance.

Testing must occur on employer-provided time and testing must continue until the workplace no longer qualifies as an outbreak. State employees can access [community testing sites](#). To obtain testing through a state funded community testing site, state employees must follow the location specific directions for setting up an appointment, which are available online or via phone registration when internet is not available. If a state employee tests with their personal health care provider, as a condition of employment, the state entity will reimburse any out-of-pocket costs incurred by the employee through CalATERS. Testing will be completed during work time.

State employees may receive COVID-19 testing with no out-of-pocket costs from their health plans. Health plans must cover the cost of COVID-19 testing for symptomatic members, or those with known or suspected exposure, at no cost to the member. For asymptomatic members, who are essential workers, pursuant to [guidance](#) issued by the Department of Managed Health Care, health plans must cover the cost of COVID-19 tests if the employees are likely to interact with the public or with people who have

been exposed to COVID-19 during the course of the site visit. Asymptomatic enrollees may be subject to cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing and must first attempt to obtain a testing appointment from an in-network provider.

Should your department have a major outbreak, defined as 20 or more COVID-19 cases in an exposed workplace within a 30-day period, please review section [3205.2 of the standards](#) for additional testing requirements.

When there are fewer than three COVID-19 cases, departments should offer information about available COVID-19 testing at no cost to the employee and allow testing on employer-provided time.

Identifying Hazards and Screening Employees

Following department policies and labor agreements, departments should regularly assess workplace risk and adjust when needed to ensure employee safety.

Departments are required to implement a process for screening employees for and responding to employees with COVID-19 symptoms. To satisfy this requirement, departments may ask employees to evaluate their own symptoms. Any department who conducts screening at the workplace should refer to the standards for additional requirements.

Training

Employees should be directed to web-based [training](#) on the prevention of COVID-19 infection in the workplace. Sessions are available for all employees including a session for managers and supervisors.

Employer-Provided Transportation

Departments that provide any transportation of an employee, during the course and scope of employment, including ride-share vans or shuttle vehicles, car-pools, and private charter buses should review section [3205.4 of the standards](#) for additional requirements. Employer-provided motor vehicle transportation does not include employer-provided transportation for emergency response, as defined.

Exclusion from Work/Return to Work

To limit transmission of COVID-19 cases in the workplace, the standards require employers to exclude employees with "COVID-19 exposure" or employees who have a confirmed positive COVID-19 test ("COVID- case") from the workplace for a specified period. "COVID-19 exposure" generally refers to being within six feet of a person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or greater in any 24-hour period.

[Executive Order N-84-20](#) aligns this provision of the standards with recently issued [CDPH COVID-19 Quarantine Guidelines](#). Departments should provide asymptomatic employees Administrative Time Off or the ability to telework during the quarantine period.

All asymptomatic employees with a "COVID-19 exposure" may discontinue quarantine after Day 10 from the last exposure with or without testing.

During critical staffing shortages when there are not enough staff to provide safe patient care, essential critical infrastructure workers in the following categories are not prohibited from returning after Day 7 from the date of last exposure if they have received a negative PCR test result from a specimen collected after Day 5:

- Exposed asymptomatic health care workers; and
- Exposed asymptomatic emergency response and social service workers who work face to face with clients in the child welfare system or in assisted living facilities.

All exposed asymptomatic contacts permitted to reduce the quarantine period to less than 14 days must:

- Adhere strictly to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, including wearing face coverings at all times, maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from others and the interventions required below, through Day 14.
- Use surgical face masks at all times during work for those returning after Day 7 and continue to use face coverings when outside the home through Day 14 after last exposure.
- Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms through Day 14 and if symptoms occur, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health department or healthcare provider and seek testing.

If a local health officer who has jurisdiction over the workplace orders a more restrictive exclusion period, departments should follow the local order.

If at any time during the quarantine period the employee becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19 and is unable to telework, the employee shall use any available leave credits until they can return to work.