



Interim Guidance: Indoor Household Services – Housecleaning, Cooking and Non-essential maintenance

UPDATED June 19, 2020

(changes from previous versions: minor wording changes and link fixes)

The following guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by local facilities and will be posted at <http://www.sfdph.org>. This interim guidance may change as knowledge, community transmission, and availability of PPE and testing change.

AUDIENCE: Businesses, their employees and individuals who provide indoor household services of house cleaning or cooking or non-essential household maintenance, AND the residents who receive these services during the COVID-19 pandemic and need to comply with the relevant health order detailed in [Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol](#) and [Appendix C-1 Additional Businesses Permitted to Operate](#). For the purposes of this guidance, employee is defined broadly and includes individuals who perform these services for others, including independent contractors, day laborers and others.

This guidance is intended for businesses and individuals providing indoor household cleaning or cooking or non-essential household maintenance services AND residents paying for these services. Tips and best practices are listed for both workers and residents for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Examples of indoor household services include:

- Residential cleaning services
- Home cooking services
- Non-essential maintenance

This guidance **does not cover indoor household services that are personal care, treatments, or personal grooming**. Prolonged time together indoors, or close contact indoors carries higher risks, and many services include direct contact or touch. As examples, this guidance **does not cover services such as massage therapy, acupuncture or other treatments, haircuts, manicures or make-up, personal trainers, tutoring, among others**. Also, this guidance **does not apply to in-home childcare**, which has different requirements. Additional guidance and tips and resources about childcare and other indoor household services are available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>

PURPOSE: This document reviews the main points of the relevant health order, outlines the steps you should take, and gives you resources and more information to help you comply with the mandatory requirements. This guidance offers 1) information for businesses and employees, followed by 2) information for residents receiving these services.



Prepare: Before Your Business Re-Opens

Business should review the tips and guidance for their requirements to comply with the relevant health order detailed in [Appendix A: Social Distancing Protocol](#) and [Appendix C-1 Additional Businesses Permitted to Operate](#). These requirements include daily symptom checks of employees, as well as useful information and resources about how to stay safer.

For Employees Providing Indoor Household Services

Tips for Businesses Providing Indoor Household Services and Employees

Employees should not go to work if they feel sick, regardless of the location of that work

If you have experienced any of these symptoms [in the last 24 hours that are not new or explained by another reason](#), stay home and inform your employer.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Feeling weak or fatigued
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, follow [this guidance](#). If the staff member did not have symptoms of COVID-19 at work or within 48 hours after leaving work, you are not required to notify staff. Your staff member should follow their healthcare provider's instructions. Make sure they [isolate themselves at home](#).

[See DPH guidance around going back to work after having COVID-19.](#)

Recommendations on cleaning and disinfecting

- [Clean and disinfect](#) all high-touch surfaces and any shared implements or tools at the beginning and end of service visits. These include as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, handles in bathrooms, fitness equipment, computer keyboards, and railings.
- Use common EPA-registered household disinfectants. View a list of [products that are EPA-approved](#) for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Businesses should provide equipment such as disposable gloves and face coverings.



- Use garbage cans for used tissues, paper towels, and gloves. Items should be bagged before disposal as possible.
- Businesses or residents should provide disinfectant and related supplies to staff to sanitize all high touch surfaces. These include countertops, refrigerator and freezer case doors, utensil drawers, payment equipment, or door handles, which may require handling throughout household services.
- Frequently touched hard surfaces, such as door handles, tools, or credit cards, should be sanitized.
- Soft surfaces should not be sanitized unless using a disinfectant recommended on the EPA approved list as the color of the surface may be changed or removed. Some soft surfaces can be disinfected with a spray and allowed to dry. Washable items can be placed in wash following the manufacturer's directions and dried in a hot drier.
- Discard gloves after each use or use hand sanitizer after each interaction.
- If surfaces cannot be wiped down, avoid touching unsanitized surfaces.
- Avoid carrying cleaning supplies and products between homes to reduce transfer of virus. When possible, residents should provide cleaning supplies and products.
- When businesses use residents' cleaning equipment, they should wipe the equipment down with disinfectant after use. Equipment includes vacuum cleaners, mops, bottles of cleaning agents and other items.
- When businesses must bring cleaning equipment and supplies between homes, wipe down all items with disinfectant after each home's cleaning. Use new supplies at each house (e.g. new sponge and microfiber mop refill, new vacuum bag).

Work safely in residential units

- When possible, increase ventilation by leaving windows and doors open or run mechanical ventilation systems.
- Wash hands or use sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol content) before entering and after exiting. Wear clean gloves if possible.
- Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
- Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum.
- While vacuuming, consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the home.
- Disinfect all work surfaces before leaving the unit.



Wear face protection

Businesses must provide face coverings for all employees with instructions that they must wear a [mask](#) at all times when at work, unless they are specifically exempted from face covering requirements in [Health Officer Order No. C19-12](#)

Maintain social distance

- When feasible, residents should leave the home when household service providers are in their home, or at minimum try to be in a different room.
- Maintain at least [six-foot distance](#) at all times, except when momentarily necessary to facilitate or accept payment and hand off items or deliver goods.

Practice healthy habits

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If handwashing facilities are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Do not share personal items like drinking glasses, eating utensils, and towels with others.

For Residents Receiving Indoor Household Services

Tips for Residents Receiving Indoor Household Services

Postpone indoor household services if you are sick

If you have experienced any of these symptoms [in the last 24 hours that are not new or explained by another reason](#), **stay home and reschedule indoor household services.**

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Feeling unusually weak or fatigued
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea

Practice social distancing

- Avoid contact with people who are sick, including businesses and workers providing indoor household services.



- Maintain at least six-foot distance with service staff at all times (ideally not in the same room), except when momentarily necessary to facilitate or accept payment and hand off items or deliver goods.
- When feasible, residents should leave the home when household service providers are in their home, or at minimum try to be in a different room.

Wear face protection

Wear a mask when you are within 6 feet from people you don't live with, unless specifically exempted from face covering requirements in [Health Officer Order No. C19-12](#)

Practice healthy habits

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If handwashing facilities are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Do not share personal items like drinking glasses, eating utensils, and towels with other people.

Additional recommendations

- When possible, leave windows and doors open to increase ventilation or run mechanical ventilation systems.
- While a room is being vacuumed, consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the home.
- Residents should provide their own products, **whenever possible to reduce transfer of germs from location to location.**
- Make sure garbage cans are available for used tissues, paper towels, and gloves.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I hire a cleaning service to clean my home?

Yes. You can hire a home cleaning service or housekeeper to clean your residence, but they must maintain social distancing while at your home. It is recommended that you open windows or run ventilation systems to increase fresh air circulation, then leave your home while cleaning is ongoing, or at minimum wear a face covering and remain in unoccupied rooms.



I don't cook—can I hire someone to cook for me at my home?

You can have someone come to your home to cook, as long as they maintain at least six-foot social distance from members of your household and follow recommended [guidance for food preparation](#). Everyone should wear a face covering, wash hands frequently, and avoid touching surfaces that have not been disinfected. It is recommended that you open windows or run ventilation systems to increase fresh air circulation, then leave your home while cooking is ongoing, or at minimum wear a face covering and remain in unoccupied rooms.

What indoor household services are allowed?

Workers and businesses may provide household services like cleaning, cooking or non-essential home maintenance, as of June 15, provided that the service allows for workers and residents to appropriately socially distance. Workers and residents must limit contact with each other, and all customer transactions and interactions **should occur outdoors if possible**. Non-essential services that do not allow for at least six feet of space between workers or residents are not allowed as of the June 15th amendment to the health order. Household service workers must wear face coverings on the job unless it's medically inadvisable for them or their job duties make it impossible. This guidance **does not cover indoor household services that are personal care, treatments, or personal grooming**. Prolonged time together indoors, or close contact indoors carries higher risks, and many services include direct contact or touch. As examples, this guidance **does not cover services such as massage therapy, acupuncture or other treatments, personal training, tutoring, haircuts, manicures, pedicures, or make-up, among others**. Additional guidance and tips and resources about childcare and other indoor household services are available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>

Resources

- Seattle and King County Public Health
<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/housing.aspx>
- <https://membership.domesticworkers.org/coronavirus/work-safely/>
- <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/disinfection-guidance-for-businesses-covid19.pdf>
- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH)
 - <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - List of Guidance documents (searchable)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance-list.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/index.html>



- LA County Public Health
 - COVID-19 Provider Page
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/>
 - COVID-19 Public page, with translations in many languages
<http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
- Santa Clara: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/home.aspx>