



**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Occupied Apartments and
Residences with Sublet Rooms
(NOT SROs/Hotels/Hostels)**

February 5, 2021

This document was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by local facilities and will be posted at <http://www.sfgdcp.org>. Information may change.

BACKGROUND and AUDIENCE: This document addresses questions frequently asked about how building owners and managers, landlords, and residents can minimize COVID risk, especially when filling vacancies in a type of shared living situation that exists in San Francisco where:

- a single owner or master tenant leases or subleases rooms, or makes rooms available to sublet for others and
- residents may share living spaces, such as kitchens and living rooms.

This guidance does not apply to other types of shared living situations, for which specific guidance may be found as follows:

- Single room occupancy hotels (SRO), hotels, hostels, or other shared living arrangements which have professional on-site management, are considered “Congregate Living Settings.” Guidance for such settings is posted at www.sfgdcp.org/covid19 under the section on “Congregate Living Settings.”
- Multifamily residential buildings such as apartment buildings, condominiums, or buildings owned by tenants-in-common (TICs) in which each individual housing unit is occupied only by one person or by two or more residents who have mutually agreed to live together in the single housing unit. Guidance for these settings may be found at www.sfgdcp.org/covid19 under Multifamily Residences.
- Senior care facilities, residential mental health or substance use disorder treatment programs, medical respite, and skilled nursing facilities. Guidance for these is found at www.sfgdcp.org/covid19hcp under Long Term and Senior Care.
- Shelters or navigation centers guidance is found at www.sfgdcp.org/covid19 under People Experiencing Homelessness.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are individuals allowed to move into occupied apartments and residences?

Yes, residential moves are allowed with one important restriction during the COVID-19 pandemic: beds may NOT be rented out in a shared dormitory style-room if people are already staying in that room. However roommates in a dormitory-style room may continue to share the room as long as they were roommates as of March 16, 2020.



Our property has a vacant room. How can we safely show a space for potential tenants?

There are three options for showing a vacancy to a prospective tenant, listed below in order with the safest option first:

1. The safest way to show a vacancy to a prospective tenant is through a video call or livestream virtual viewing.
2. If a virtual viewing is not possible, you may invite one non-resident to the property to take images (still or video) of the spaces, but only when the current residents are not present.
3. If neither of the above two options are possible, in-person showings can be most safely conducted if these recommendations are followed:
 - Appointments and viewings must be limited to two visitors from one household, and only one person should show the vacancy, for a total of no more than three people from two different households showing the vacancy.
 - The visitor(s) must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure and must not participate in an in-person showing if they answer “yes” to any of the screening questions found at www.sfgdcp.org/screeningvisitors.
 - In-person showings must be scheduled at a time when current residents are not physically present. This is important to reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission within the indoor space. All existing requirements regarding tenant notification should be adhered to.
 - The space should be empty for at least 30 minutes from the time residents leave and visitors arrive, and again for another 30 minutes after visitors leave before residents return. During this time windows should be opened and/or mechanical ventilation systems run to allow Review <https://www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-Ventilation> for guidance on improving ventilation for indoor spaces.
 - Properly worn face coverings are required.
 - Visitors should not touch anything within the residence. If any surface is touched, including door knobs, water faucets, or light switches, the surface should be immediately cleaned or disinfected following guidance at sfgdcp.org/covidcleaning.
 - In person showings should be limited to as short a duration as possible.
 - Please review sfgdcp.org/indoorrisk for additional guidance related to mitigating the elevated risk with indoor spaces.

When should individuals NOT move into occupied apartment and residency situations?

Before moving into an occupied or shared living situation, individuals must complete the screening questions at www.sfgdcp.org/screen. If they answer yes to any of the questions they MUST NOT move into the occupied apartment until they have followed the steps for isolation and/or quarantine explained at www.sfgdcp.org/i&q. Once they have completed the required isolation or quarantine, they may then move into communal housing.



Importantly, even if an individual with COVID-19 symptom(s) tests negative for COVID-19, they should not move into communal housing until it has been at least 24 hours since their last fever AND they have improving symptoms. This is because the test is not perfect and a person may actually have COVID-19 despite the negative test.

Are individuals planning to move into occupied apartments and residency situations required to get tested for COVID-19?

Individuals who do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 are not required to be tested for COVID-19 before moving into communal housing situations. Mandatory testing is not indicated when people are living in a porous living environment (housing where people come and go throughout the day to work, run errands, etc.) and anyone could become positive from their outside interactions at any time. In these circumstances, testing should not be a barrier to housing.

How can individuals move into occupied apartments and residencies as safely as possible?

Residential moves are permitted—and movers can be employed—as long as all social distancing and face covering requirements are followed. Movers should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure as described in www.sfcdcp.org/screeningvisitors. Other tenants should consider leaving the residence while a move-in is occurring to reduce the risk of person-to-person COVID-19 transmission.

Please also review sfcdcp.org/indoorrisk for guidance related to mitigating the elevated risk with indoor spaces.

If moving into or out of the Bay Area region, please review www.sfcdcp.org/travel as travel orders may require quarantine after travel.

Is there guidance for how residents of occupied apartments and residencies can stay safe?

Yes, please review the guidance on “congregate living settings” posted at www.sfcdcp.org/covid19 under the section on “Congregate Living Settings.” In particular, please review the section on “guidance for residents.” “Congregate living settings” are a similar living situation where residents also share spaces.

What should I do if I, or my roommate, needs to either isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 symptoms, close exposure, or tests positive for COVID-19?

If you answer “yes” to any of the questions at <https://www.sfcdcp.org/screen> you should:

- get tested for COVID19 by contact your healthcare provider; or signing up for free testing at CityTestSF sf.gov/citytestsf.
- [Review](#) Isolation and Quarantine Booklet for more information and tips on how specifically to isolate and quarantine at www.sf.gov/file/after-your-covid-19-test-booklet.

Do landlords have the right to request disclosure of positive COVID-19 tests if it affects the health and safety of other tenants in the occupied apartment or residency?

Because it is protected health information, there is no way to confirm if a specific resident or visitor has COVID-19 without explicit consent.



Some people who have COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms but are still able to transmit the virus to others. Tenants and visitors should always take steps to prevent being exposed, so knowing whether someone has answered “yes” to any of the screening questions should not change your actions to prevent COVID-19.

How can tenants who have chronic illnesses or are vulnerable/ at higher risk stay safe? Can they request additional safety considerations from landlords during this time.

Those who wish to take extra precautions in the home, including those who are higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, can find more information at www.sfcddcp.org/additionalcovid19precautions. Tenants needing additional support for isolation and quarantine should review www.sfcddcp.org/i&q.

What are the responsibilities of landlords and residents of occupied apartments and residencies?

- No more than one person may stay in a room at any one time unless the person is also residing in the room with his or her pre-existing household.
- Common areas should be cleaned according to guidance at www.sfcddcp.org/covidcleaning
- Facial coverings and all other social distancing protocols must be observed in all common areas including hallways, laundry rooms, elevators and entry points.
- Non-resident landlords and building managers should limit in-person visits to only essential functions, such as required maintenance, health and safety issues.
- Indoor social gatherings with non-household members may be prohibited or restricted. See current restrictions in the [Business Capacities and Activities Table](#). Guidance on safer social interactions may be found at www.sfcddcp.org/safersocial.