

Recommended Guidance for Short-term Rentals With Shared Spaces

BACKGROUND

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused coronavirus disease (abbreviated as COVID-19). Public health experts continue to learn about SARS-CoV-2, but based on current data and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (those within about six feet) via respiratory droplets. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented yet, but current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials.

PURPOSE

The following guidance was created to help operators of short-term residential rentals with shared spaces (laundry facilities, shared kitchens, exercise/recreation rooms, dining rooms, pools/spas) working together with guests, staff, and public health officials to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

DEFINITIONS

COVID-19 is caused by a new virus. There is much to learn about the [transmissibility, severity, and other features of the disease](#). Everyone can do their part to help plan, prepare, and respond to this emerging public health threat.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To maintain safe operations:

- Review the CDC [guidance for businesses and employers](#) to identify strategies to maintain operations and a healthy working and living environment.
- Develop flexible sick leave policies. Require staff to stay home when sick, even without documentation from doctors to alleviate the burden of healthcare systems.
 - Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family or household members or to care for children in the event of school or childcare dismissals.
 - Make sure that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Develop flexible cancellation policies for guests to encourage them to reschedule or cancel trips if feeling ill.

- Create plans to protect the staff and guests from spread of COVID-19 and help them put in place [personal preventive measures](#).
- [Clean and disinfect](#) shared areas (such as exercise room, laundry facilities, shared bathrooms, and elevators) and frequently touched surfaces following CDC guidelines using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) more than once a day.
- Identify common areas (such as pools, exercise rooms, recreation rooms,) that might need to be limited or temporarily discontinued.
- Identify a list of healthcare facilities and [alternative care sites](#) where staff or guests with COVID-19 can receive appropriate care, if needed.
- Develop policies for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff, such as [when to use personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#), when PPE is necessary, how to [properly don \(put on\), use, and doff \(take off\) PPE](#), and how to properly dispose of PPE.
 - Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including trash handling.
 - If gowns are not available (or need to be prioritized for health care facilities), coveralls, aprons, or work uniforms can be used during cleaning and disinfecting. Ensure that the laundry equipment is in good working order, and supply hot water if necessary. Reusable (washable) clothing and gowns should be laundered at the end of each shift. Wash hands after handling dirty laundry.
 - Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by sick people, and when changing tasks. Wash hands immediately after safely removing gloves.
- Consider putting in at least 24 hours between check-out and check-in of guests, allowing additional vacancy time for cleaners come in.

Encourage staff and guests to prepare and take [action to protect themselves and others](#)

- Encourage [social distancing](#) by asking staff and guests to stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart from others and wear [cloth face coverings](#) in any shared spaces, including spaces restricted to staff only.
 - For groups residing under one roof (whole-house/cabin, condo, etc.) this 6 feet does not apply. This measure is intended for intermingling of separate groups.
- Post signs throughout rentals to teach proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, avoidance of face touching, and social distancing. See: <https://cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus-resources.php> under *Posters, Flyers, and Videos*).
- Consider any special needs or accommodations for those who [need to take extra precautions](#), such as older adults, people with disabilities, and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
- Limit the presence of visitors in shared areas.

- Use physical barriers, such as sneeze guards, or extra tables or chairs, to protect front desk/check-in staff who will have interactions with guests, visitors, and the public.
- Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies for staff and guests in common areas at your facility, such as soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol, tissues, no touch trash bins, and, if possible, [cloth face coverings](#) that are washed or discarded after each use.
- Consider any special communications and assistance needs of your staff and guests, including [persons with disabilities](#).
- Ill guests or guests with symptoms should be asked not to arrive.
- Screening protocols prior to, or upon, arrival may be implemented

Note: Surgical masks and N-95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. All staff and guests should wear a [cloth face covering](#) when in shared areas of the facility and maintain social distancing to slow the spread of the virus.

Communicate to staff and guests:

Identify platforms such as email, websites, hotlines, automated text messaging, newsletters, and flyers to help communicate information on:

- Guidance and directives from state and local officials, including health departments.
- How your short-term rental is helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- How additional information will be shared, and where to direct questions.
- How to stay healthy, including [videos, fact sheets, and posters](#) with information on [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and how to stop the spread of germs, [how to wash your hands](#), and what to do [if you are sick](#).
- How staff and guests can [cope and manage stress](#) and protect others from [stigma and discrimination](#).
- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information. Communications may need to be framed or adapted so they are culturally appropriate for your audience and easy to understand. For example, there are resources on the CDC website that are in many [languages](#).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMON SPACES:

- Consider how you can use multiple strategies to maintain [social \(physical\) distance](#) between everyone in shared spaces.
- Depending on the size of social gatherings permitted, consider cancelling or modifying all public or non-essential group activities and events.

- Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells. Consider limiting the number of individuals in an elevator at one time and designating one directional stairwells, if possible.
- Make sure that shared rooms in the facility have good air flow from an air conditioner or an opened window.
- Consider working with building maintenance staff to determine if the building ventilation system can be modified to increase ventilation rates or the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) shared spaces and frequently touched surfaces (door handles, light switches, counters, handrails, sinks) following CDC guidance using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) more than once a day if possible.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNAL ROOMS IN YOUR FACILITY:

Shared kitchens and dining rooms

- Restrict the number of people allowed in the shared areas to allow a total number in which everyone can stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart from one another.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils. Non-disposable food service items used should be handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- [Wash hands](#) after handling used food service items.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags and handling and disposing of trash. [Wash hands](#).

Laundry rooms

- Maintain access and adequate supplies to laundry facilities to help prevent spread of COVID-19.
- Restrict the number of people allowed in laundry rooms at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart.
- Consider providing disposable gloves, soap for washing hands, and household cleaners and [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) for guests and staff to clean and disinfect buttons, knobs, and handles of laundry machines, laundry baskets, and shared laundry items.
- Post [guidelines](#) for doing laundry such as washing instructions and handling of dirty [laundry](#).

Recreational areas such as activity rooms and exercise rooms

- Consider closing activity rooms or restricting the number of people allowed in at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart.
- Consider closing exercise rooms.
- Activities and sports (e.g., ping pong, basketball, chess) that require close contact are not recommended.

Pools and hot tubs

- Consider closing pools and hot tubs or limiting access.
 - Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (with chlorine or bromine) should kill COVID-19 in pools and hot tubs, they may become crowded and make it difficult to implement social distancing and other safety measures.
 - [Cleaning and disinfecting](#) should be addressed for the pool and hot tub area and in locker rooms if they remain open.

Shared bathrooms

- Shared bathrooms should be cleaned regularly using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#), at least twice per day (e.g., in the morning and evening or after times of heavy use).
- Make sure bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels or automated hand dryers. Hand sanitizer could also be made available.
- Make sure trash cans are emptied regularly.
- Provide information on how to wash hands properly. Hang [signs](#) in bathroom, and if possible, ensure availability/supply of hot water.
- Guests should be instructed that sinks could be an infection source and should avoid placing toothbrushes directly on counter surfaces. Totes could also be used for personal items to limit their contact with other surfaces in the bathroom.

IF A GUEST IN YOUR FACILITY HAS COVID-19 (SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED):

- Have guest seek advice from a healthcare provider to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.
- Have guests notify you if feeling ill with COVID-19 like symptoms (fever, coughing, shortness of breath)
- Minimize the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with guests who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - Staff at [higher risk](#) of severe illness from COVID-19 should not have close contact with guests who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, if possible.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING AFTER SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 EXPOSURE OF A GUEST

- If a guest was in a building while infectious (starting 2 days before onset of symptoms) and it has been less than a week since the guest was last in the building, cleaning and disinfecting is recommended.
- If it has been more than a week since the guest was last in the building, then special cleaning is not necessary.

- It is recommended to close off areas used by the guests 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. The CDC offers guidance on how best to clean an area in which an infectious person was present. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS COVID-19 (SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED)

See the [Guidance for Workplaces: Responding to Sick or Possibly Sick Employees with COVID-19](#)

Note on returning to work after COVID-19 illness: The CDC has updated their stop of home isolation criteria to at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (up from 7 days), AND other symptoms have improved AND no fever for at least 24 hours, without fever-reducing medicine.

Resources

- [CDH Coronavirus Monitoring](#)
- [IDHW Resources for the Novel Coronavirus](#)
- [Environmental Cleaning & Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [How & When to Wash Your Hands](#)
- [Printable Resources](#)
- [Multilingual Resources](#)

CDH Call Center (208-321-2222 M-F 8:30-4:30)

Sources: CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>