



COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Hotels and Lodging

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[covid19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/IndustryGuidance/Hotels-and-Lodging.aspx)



OVERVIEW

On March 19, 2020, the State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health issued an order requiring most Californians to stay at home to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 among the population.

The impact of COVID-19 on the health of Californians is not yet fully known. Reported illness ranges from very mild (some people have no symptoms) to severe illness that may result in death. Certain groups, including people aged 65 or older and those with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk of hospitalization and serious complications. Transmission is most likely when people are in close contact with an infected person, even if that person does not have any symptoms or has not yet developed symptoms.

Precise information about the number and rates of COVID-19 by industry or occupational groups, including among critical infrastructure workers, is not available at this time. There have been multiple outbreaks in a range of workplaces, indicating that workers are at risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19 infection. Examples of these workplaces include long-term care facilities, prisons, food production, warehouses, meat processing plants, and grocery stores.

As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

Key prevention practices include:

- ✓ physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- ✓ use of face coverings by employees (where respiratory protection is not required) and customers/clients,
- ✓ frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- ✓ training employees on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention plan.

In addition, it will be critical to have in place appropriate processes to identify new cases of illness in workplaces and, when they are identified, to intervene quickly and work with public health authorities to halt the spread of the virus.

Purpose

This document provides guidance for the hotels and lodging industry to support a safe, clean environment for workers and customers. The guidance is not intended to revoke or repeal any employee rights, either statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained, and is not exhaustive, as it does not include county health orders, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA.¹ Stay current on changes to public health guidance and state/local orders, as the COVID-19 situation continues. Cal/OSHA has more safety and health guidance on their [Cal/OSHA Guidance on Requirements to Protect Workers from Coronavirus webpage](#). CDC has additional guidance [for businesses and employers](#).



Worksite Specific Plan

- Establish a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every facility, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas, and designate a person at each facility to implement the plan.
- Identify contact information for the local health department where the facility is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among employees.
- Train and communicate with employees and employee representatives on the plan.
- Regularly evaluate the workplace for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
- Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected employee and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive employee(s) and close contacts.
- Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.



Topics for Employee Training

- Information on [COVID-19](#), how to prevent it from spreading, and which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work if employees have a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on [CDC's webpage](#).

- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when employees cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per [CDC guidelines](#)).
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time (see Physical Distancing section below).
- Proper use of face coverings, including:
 - Face coverings do not protect the wearer and are not personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - 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 should be washed after each shift.
- Ensure temporary or contract workers at the facility are also properly trained in COVID-19 prevention policies and have necessary PPE. Discuss these responsibilities ahead of time with organizations supplying temporary and/or contract workers.
- Information on employer or government-sponsored leave benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on [government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID-19](#), including employee's sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee's rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the Governor's [Executive Order N-62-20](#).



Individual Control Measures and Screening

- Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible. Both screeners and employees should wear face coverings for the screening.
- If requiring self-screening at home, which is an appropriate alternative to providing it at the establishment, ensure that screening was performed

prior to the worker leaving the home for their shift and follows [CDC guidelines](#), as described in the Topics for Employee Training section above.

- Encourage workers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Employers should provide and ensure workers use all required protective equipment. Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended when employees are in the vicinity of others. Workers should have covers available and wear them when on property, in breakrooms and offices, or in a vehicle during work-related travel with others. Face coverings must not be shared.
- Housekeepers and others who must enter guest rooms should be provided with and required to wear face coverings. Housekeeping must only service rooms when guests are not present. Housekeepers should be instructed to minimize contact with guests' personal belongings when cleaning. Housekeepers should be instructed to have ventilation systems operating and/or open windows if possible to increase air circulation.
- Employers should encourage handwashing for employees after they check guests in or out, clean rooms, and open mail or handle other commonly touched items. Valet service drivers, baggage handlers, and housekeepers should wash their hands regularly during their shift and use proper hand sanitizer. Baggage deliveries should be done when guests are not in their rooms.
- Hotels should allow housekeepers extra time to clean rooms without loss of pay to account for required precautions and to allow them to conduct more thorough cleaning and disinfection of rooms between guests.
- Guests and visitors should be screened upon arrival and asked to use hand sanitizer and to wear a face covering. Appropriate signage should also be prominently displayed outlining proper face covering usage and current physical distancing practices in use throughout the property.



Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas such as hotel lobbies, front desk check-in counters, bell desks, break rooms and lunch areas, changing areas, loading docks, kitchens and areas of ingress and egress including stairways, stairwells, handrails, and elevator controls. Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces including door handles, guestroom

interior locks, vending and ice machines, light switches, TV remote controls, phones, hairdryers, washer and dryer doors and controls, baggage carts, shuttle door handles, toilets, and handwashing facilities.

- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the employee's job duties.
- Equip workstations, desks, and help counters with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, and provide personal hand sanitizers to all staff directly assisting customers.
- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times and provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.
- When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. Provide employees training on manufacturer's directions and Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use. Workers using cleaners or disinfectants should wear gloves as required by the product instructions.
- Avoid sharing phones, tablets, laptops, desks, pens, other work supplies, or offices wherever possible. Never share PPE. Any shared tools and equipment should be sanitized before, during and after each shift or anytime the equipment is transferred to a new employee. This includes phones, radios, computers and other communication devices, payment terminals, kitchen implements, engineering tools, safety buttons, folios, housekeeping carts and cleaning equipment, keys, time clocks, and all other direct contact items.
- Discontinue the use of shared food and beverage equipment in office pantries (including shared coffee brewers). Close manually operated ice machines or use hands free machines.
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in offices, guest rooms, and other spaces.



Additional Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols for Hotel Operations

- All reusable collateral, such as magazines, menus, local attraction details, coupons, etc., should be removed from rooms. Critical information should be provided as single-use collateral and/or electronically posted.
- Dirty linens should be removed and transported from guest rooms in single-use, sealed bags and pillow protectors on the guest room beds should be changed daily. Bagging of these items should be done in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported. All bed linen and laundry should be washed at a high temperature and cleaned in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#).
- Consider leaving rooms vacant for 24 to 72 hours prior to or after cleaning.
- In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19, the guest's room should be removed from service and quarantined. The guest room should not be returned to service until case has been confirmed or cleared. In the event of a positive case, the room should only be returned to service after undergoing an enhanced sanitization protocol, ideally by a licensed third-party expert and in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#).
- Install hand sanitizer dispensers, touchless whenever possible, at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas such as driveways, reception areas, hotel lobbies, restaurant entrances, meeting and convention spaces, elevator landings, pools, salons, and exercise areas.
- Consider providing guests an amenity bag during check-in containing face covering, hand sanitizer, and a COVID-19 awareness card. Where possible, equip hotel rooms with a bottle of sanitizer for guest use.



Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between employees and others. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings or signs to indicate to where employees and/or guests should stand). Any area where guests or employees queue should be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. This includes check-in, check-out, elevator lobbies, coffee shops and dining, and taxi and ridesharing lines.
- Physical distancing protocols should be used in employee break areas, uniform control areas, training classrooms, shared office spaces, the employee services window (via a teller style window), and other high-density areas in order to ensure appropriate distancing between employees.

- Employee pre-shift meetings should be conducted virtually or in areas that allow for appropriate physical distancing between employees. Larger departments should stagger employee arrival times to minimize traffic volume in back of house corridors and service elevators.
- Consider offering workers who request modified duties options that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., managing inventory rather than working at the concierge desk or managing administrative needs through telework).
- Stagger employee breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.
- Close breakrooms, use barriers, or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate workers and discourage congregating during breaks. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.
- Redesign office spaces, cubicles, lobbies, front desk check-in areas, business centers, concierge service areas, and other spaces if possible to ensure workspaces and guest accommodations allow for at least six feet distancing.
- Discourage employees from congregating in high traffic areas such as bathrooms and hallways and establish directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic, if possible, to eliminate people from passing by one another.
- Limit the number of individuals riding in an elevator and ensure the use of face coverings. Use signage to communicate these requirements.
- Require employees to avoid handshakes and similar greetings that break physical distance.
- Eliminate person-to-person contact for delivery of goods to physical offices. Avoid touching others' pens and clipboards



Additional Physical Distancing Guidelines for Hotel Operations

- Guests should enter through doors that are either propped open, if possible, or are automated or manually operated by an employee that is frequently handwashing and/or using proper hand sanitizer.
- Implement peak period queueing procedures, including a lobby greeter and having guests queue outside to maintain at least six feet of physical distance between persons.

- Employees should not open the doors of cars or taxis.
- Guest room service, laundry and dry-cleaning services, and amenity deliveries should be made available using contactless pick-up and delivery protocols.
- Hotel operations with restaurants should limit food and beverage offerings to take-out and “contactless” room service until dine-in establishments are allowed to resume modified or full operation.
- Hotels with pools should ensure that physical distancing requirements can be enforced, this could include limiting one person per lane in swimming pools.
- Hotels with golf courses should only allow one player per cart, except for immediate family and people who cohabitate, and increase tee time spacing, and should only open once golf courses are allowed to reopen.



Considerations for Hotels When Full Operations Resume

- Hotels operations with dine-in restaurants, bars, fitness centers, spas, salons, large meeting venues, banquet halls, or convention centers should keep those areas closed until each of those types of establishments are allowed to resume modified or full operation.
- When allowed to reopen to modified or full operation, hotels with dine-in restaurants and bars should:
 - Reduce seating capacities or reconfigure seating to allow for a minimum of six feet between each seated group/party of guests.
 - Implement additional and specific cleaning and sanitizing protocols for food processing and restaurant operations.
 - Refer to guidelines for the restaurant and bar industries when they become available on the [COVID-19 Resilience Roadmap website](#).
- When allowed to reopen to modified or full operation, hotels with fitness centers, spas, and salons should refer to the relevant guidelines on the [COVID-19 Resilience Roadmap website](#) when available.
- When larger gatherings are permitted by state/local orders, those hotels with meeting, conference, banquet, or other event accommodations must:

- Adjust room configurations to allow for physical distancing between guests.
- Decrease the capacity for conference and meeting rooms in order to maintain at least six feet of physical distance between participants.
- Suspend self-serve buffet style food service and replace it with alternative service styles.
- For additional direction on meetings and convention centers, refer to the guidelines on the [COVID-19 Resilience Roadmap website](#) when available.

¹Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. The hotels and lodging industry must comply with all [Cal/OSHA](#) standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#). Additionally, employers should be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.

