



# **COVID-19 Questions and Resources: Part 2**

**for Housing and Home Assistance Providers**

August 26, 2020

# Key Objectives

Learn about resources from the health department that are available to you if someone in the shelter tests positive for COVID-19.

Discuss additional topics for infection control.

Apply an Infection Prevention Mindset to potential scenarios.

# What if someone tests positive at the shelter?

If someone was in your shelter while they were infectious, **the Health Department will reach out to your shelter.**

You may also hear directly from a guest or staff member and you may receive information before the Health Department contacts you.

The Health Department will work closely with you to provide guidance, help identify close contacts, and facilitate on-site testing.

# What can you and your guest do to facilitate quick response?

Arrange for medical releases between the shelter and guests, if possible

Guests that do not have an address that they regularly use to receive mail could use a specific mail address associated with the shelter

- If this address is listed at the health department, it will create a “flag” that it is a congregate setting if test is positive

If you hear that a guest or staff has received a positive test result, call the Health Department at 802-863-7240

# Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is used to provide education, support and guidance to people who are diagnosed with an infectious disease.

It's also used to identify people who have been in close contact with them, so they can take steps to stop the disease from spreading to others.

# Contact Tracing for the person who is positive

**If someone tests positive for COVID-19, they will get a call from the Health Department. The contact tracer will:**

- Give guidance about the need to self-isolate
- Answer questions
- Find about what support is needed for the person to isolate
- Get information about close contacts

# Contact Tracing for the person who is exposed

If someone is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they will get a call from the Health Department. The contact tracer will:

- Give guidance about the need to quarantine
- Answer questions
- Find about what support is needed to quarantine
- How to self-monitor for symptoms and next steps if they develop

# Isolation vs Quarantine

		Isolation	Quarantine
	<b>For whom?</b>	People sick with COVID-19 <b>or</b> tested positive for COVID-19 but did not have any symptoms.	People with no symptoms and who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>were in close contact with someone sick with COVID-19, <b>or</b></li> <li>are returning to Vermont from out of the state (except select counties) for anything other than an essential purpose.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
	<b>Do I stay home?</b>	Yes	Yes
	<b>Can I go to work?</b>	No. Work at home if your job allows it and if you feel well enough.	No. Work at home if your job allows it.

		Isolation	Quarantine
	<b>Can I go outside for walks, bike rides, hikes?</b>	No, not until you have recovered. <sup>2</sup>	No, not until 14 days have passed and no symptoms have appeared. <sup>3</sup>
	<b>Can I go out for groceries and other essential items like medication?</b>	No, not until you have recovered. <sup>2</sup>	No, not until 14 days have passed and no symptoms have appeared. <sup>3</sup>
	<b>Do I stay in a separate room in my home?</b>	Yes, until you have recovered. <sup>2</sup>	If possible, until 14 days have passed, and no symptoms have appeared. <sup>3</sup>
	<b>What if I start to feel ill?</b>		Start isolation and call your health care provider.

# Ventilation

## To increase ventilation, you can:

- Open the windows, or screened doors, if possible
- Operate a window air conditioner that has an outdoor air intake or vent, with the vent open (some window air conditioners do not have outside air intakes)
- Open the outside air intake of the HVAC system, if yours has one (this is not common). Consult your HVAC manual or an HVAC professional for details.
- Operate a bathroom fan when the bathroom is in use and continuously, if possible

***In general, care should be taken to minimize air from fans or ventilation systems blowing from one person directly at another person***

# What to do if your employee tests positive

Be ready to work with the Health Department to gather important information.

- This could include information about when was the last day the staff member worked and who was staying in the shelter during the time that the staff member was working.

Support employees who are asked to stay home.

Provide clear and confidential information to other staff members.

Clean and disinfect the shelter spaces where the staff member was working.

# **Using an Infection Prevention Mindset**

# Scenario #1

You're expecting Keith to come into the office alone to meet and go over some Section 8 paperwork.

You have a conference room prepped with two chairs appropriately distanced and a plan for Keith to go through the COVID screening questions, wash his hands before entering, and wear a mask.

However, when he comes in, he has his two young children with him unexpectedly because his childcare fell through.

How should you move forward?

# Scenario #1

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# Scenario #1 Risk Mitigation

## **Kids come to the appointment**

- Ask kids to do same preliminary screening (questions, hands washed, masks if possible, etc.)
- Provide activity in corner
- Ensure area is big enough to accommodate larger number of people
- See if another room that is not typically used for an office is available
- Limit the amount of items touched by anyone
- Use a central table to pass off paperwork to maximize space
- Is it possible to have a barrier in the room, particularly a plexiglass screen?
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the room afterwards

## Scenario #2a

A new guest arrives at your facility and is unwilling to wear a mask.

You have provided them with a mask and while they have not raised any concerns about the mask, when you see them around the facility, they are not wearing their mask.

You have put signs up around your facility about the importance of both physically distancing and wearing a mask.

Other guests have asked you why they are not wearing a mask and if they don't have to wear a mask either.

## Scenario #2a

A new guest arrives at your facility and is **unwilling to wear a mask**.

You have **provided them with a mask** and while they have not raised any concerns about the mask, when you see them around the facility, they are not wearing their mask.

You have **put signs up around your facility about the importance of both physically distancing and wearing a mask**.

Other guests have asked you why they are not wearing a mask and if they don't have to wear a mask.

# Scenario #2a Risk Mitigation

## Unwilling to wear a mask

- Work with the individual to find the root cause
  - Is there a medical reason?
  - Is the mask uncomfortable?
  - Do they forget to wear it?
  - Do they not think it is important/actually helps?
- Are there ways this individual can stay separate from others?
  - If they are unwilling to wear a mask, perhaps that means they are not able to use the congregate areas or they eat in their room.

# Scenario #2a Risk Mitigation

## Other guests question why they have to wear a mask

- Talk with guests about why they are being asked to wear a mask
  - Wearing a mask keeps others safe and it is important in group environments to look out for others.
- Help guests understand that the only actions they can control are their own

## Scenario #2b

A new guest arrives at your facility and is **unable to wear a mask**.

You have **provided them with a mask** and while they have not raised any concerns about the mask, when you see them around the facility, they are not wearing their mask.

You have **put signs up around your facility about the importance of both physically distancing and wearing a mask**.

When asked to put on the mask she replies that she doesn't have to because she has asthma and she doesn't think masks do anything anyway.

Other guests have asked you why they are not wearing a mask and if they don't have to wear a mask.

# Scenario #2b Risk Mitigation

## Unable to wear a mask

- **Work with the guest to find alternatives so they are not exposed to others or potentially exposing others**
  - Is there a separate place for them to eat?
  - Can there be a sign up sheet for the kitchen so that each guest has their own time and will not be in contact with others?
- **Focus on the other important actions they can take to reduce their risk**
  - Talk to them about the importance of cough/sneeze etiquette and hand washing.
  - Encourage them to distance themselves from others
- **Look into alternatives**
  - Are they able to wear a face shield? This does not provide as much protection compared to a mask, but could be considered if they are unable to have something cover their mouth/nose.
  - Are there any plastic partitions that can be used if staff need to meet with someone who is unable to wear a mask?

## Scenario #3

A group of guests have been together at a singles shelter for the past few months. Generally folks are doing well wearing masks, socially distancing, and limiting time in the community.

One of the guests, however, is getting restless and starting to get more and more frustrated with the expectations. He's started spending a lot of time in the community without a mask or distancing and other guests are complaining that he's coming into their space and they often have to remind him to put on his mask.

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# Scenario #3 Risk Mitigation

## Frustrated with the expectations

- Keep things simple
  - Finding ways to simplify the expectations of guests can help them feel less daunting.
  - Keep messaging simple
- Work with individuals who are not following expectations to understand why
- Make it easy for guests to follow expectations
  - Have masks available at front desk
  - Communicate to all guests clear and simple expectations (wear a mask in common areas, wash hands before leaving and when coming back, keep distance from others)

# Scenario #3 Risk Mitigation

## Spending time in the community without a mask

- Make masks readily available within the shelter to help encourage people to wear masks while in the shelter
- Work on the aspects you have some control over
  - You might not be able to control if someone wears a mask outside the shelter, but you can work to control the risk of COVID-19 spread within your facility.
    - Hand sanitizer in places where soap isn't available
    - Have visuals to show physical distancing (signs on wall or tape on floor)
    - Reducing people in congregate areas (have sign up sheets for laundry or kitchen)

# Scenario #3 Risk Mitigation

## Offering options

- Making a decision to not wear a mask in the space may mean less use of common areas
  - Meals may be taking in a separate area
  - May not be able to use open areas

## Support other guests' positive behaviors

- Help them explore the things they *do* have control over
  - Not spending time with that person
  - Washing hands consistently
  - Using a surgical mask (if available) instead of a cloth mask

## Scenario #4

A guest has learned that someone at their work has tested positive for COVID-19.

The guest works closely with the individual who tested positive and is worried they might have been exposed.

The Health Department calls the guest and a member of the Contact Tracing team lets them know they should quarantine.

The guest wants to know where they should quarantine and how they will get there.

# Scenario #4 Information

The guest should immediately put on a mask (if not already wearing) and stay in a separate room with a door until their entrance to Quarantine Housing is assured.

Harbor Place is the current designated **Isolation and Quarantine Housing**.

# Harbor Place Amenities

Guests in Isolation and Quarantine Housing have access to the following amenities:

- Private bedrooms and bathrooms
- Three meals a day –breakfast, lunch, and dinner –delivered to rooms
- Telephonic support for guest social and mental health well-being
- Access to laundry onsite and fresh linens, as needed
- Prescription delivery from Kinney Drugs
- Cleaning supplies (hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, paper towels)
- Personal hygiene items can be purchased by guests for delivery by Kinney Drugs
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (facemasks, gloves)

# Referral to Harbor Place

If a guest screens to have symptoms or exposure to COVID-19:

- Contact the guest's PCP or your Shelter's identified Health Care Provider by phone.
  - **Do not** go to the doctor's office or send a guest to the hospital **unless** instructed to do so or in a medical emergency.
- The Health Care Provider will determine if this is a suspected case of COVID-19 and will refer to testing or provide a diagnosis as appropriate.
- If the Health Care Provider CANNOT be reached right away, contact your facility's designated medical consult or the state's medical consult to arrange for referral.

Additional information is [available online](#).

# Transportation to Isolation and Quarantine Housing

The **Agency of Human Services (AHS)** will provide transportation for Vermonters without their own transportation:

1. with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and
2. who need to be transported to/from an AHS Isolation or Recovery site, and/or
3. who need to be transported to/from a testing location

AHS transportation will be handled by ambulance personnel who are experienced with the personal protective equipment and disinfection processes required to handle these trips safely.

Additional information is available [online](#).

# Other Resources

[Frequently Asked Questions \(CDC\)](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(VDH\)](#)

[Vermont Department of Health Resource page](#)

[Vermont Department of Health COVID-19 page](#)



**Thank you!**

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[healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19)