



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQ for Contracted Health and Human Service Providers As of March 6, 2020

Introduction

This document provides City-contracted providers with guidance on responding to the newly recognized respiratory disease – Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please consult guidance from the NYC Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which are also provided on [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) and [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

Responses to Questions

Q1. What actions should employers be taking in response to the Novel Coronavirus?

CDC interim guidance for businesses and employers and the NYC Health Department's general disinfection guidance for non-healthcare settings can be found at [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) and [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

Q2. What guidance should we distribute to our employees and clients?

Direct employees to [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) and [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for up-to-date information and guidance. Resources may also be found at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Good personal hygiene remains the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Employers should encourage staff to:

- Stay home if sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, shirt sleeve or bent arm, not hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this Coronavirus.

The NYC Health Department does not recommend the routine use of face masks if you are not sick. Face masks are not needed for general or routine tasks by staff – even those who frequently interact with the public. Remember that people wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or to protect others from a common cold. In addition, some staff may have to use either face

masks or N95 respirators per their organization’s protocol for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual. No COVID-19 specific precautions are recommended for interactions with the general public, including people showing no symptoms who visited affected parts of the world.

Q3. What should employees or clients do if they have symptoms?

- Employees or clients with symptoms (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath), should stay home and call their doctor and tell them about any travel history.
- For those who do not have a doctor or health insurance, they can visit an NYC Health + Hospital facility. To find health care: www.nychealthandhospitals.org/hospitals.

Q4. How should we prepare and clean our facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19? What protocols should be followed for congregate and residential settings?

General disinfection guidance for non-health care settings and protocols for congregate settings can be found at nyc.gov and nyc.gov/health/coronavirus.

Q5. How should individual businesses or CBOs prepare for potential local outbreak?

Business and Employer Guidance can be found at nyc.gov and nyc.gov/health/coronavirus. It provides general guidance for preparedness, including steps to creating an outbreak response plan. For program-specific guidance and aligning to existing program specific emergency plans, please consult your contracting agency.

Q6. Should we cancel programs or services?

At this time, there are no COVID-19 specific precautions recommended for interactions with the general public.

Q7. What is the City’s paid sick leave policy for contracted providers as it pertains to the novel Coronavirus?

Employees should follow the quarantine protocols issued by the CDC (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>). The CDC defines four categories of risk – “High Risk,” “Medium Risk,” “Low Risk” and “No Identifiable Risk.”

The CDC recommends that persons in the high-risk and medium-risk categories who are symptomatic be immediately isolated and medically evaluated.

The CDC recommends that persons in the high-risk category who are asymptomatic be quarantined for a period of 14 days.

The CDC recommends that persons in the medium-risk category who are asymptomatic voluntarily self-monitor by remaining home or in a comparable setting, avoiding congregate settings, and limiting public activities.

Organizations under contract with the City are encouraged to treat the absence of employees as excusable with pay and without charge to leave balances when the absence is required because of a

Health Department ruling with respect to quarantine. Employees who have been diagnosed as infected by COVID-19 should receive time off with pay without charge to leave balances.

To the extent practicable and allowable, the City will reimburse providers for paid time off associated with Health Department Protocols. All information must be appropriately documented. The City will be providing further guidance on documentation.

All employers are required to adhere to applicable City, State and Federal laws, including their City contract, regarding paid leave. For more information about the City's Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law, please see <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/about/paid-sick-leave-law.page>. If there are questions about your City contract's policies, please contact your City contracting agency.

Q8. What is the impact on contract payment and performance evaluations if a provider cannot meet service levels because of limited staff, limited client attendance or facility or program closing required because of a Health Department ruling?

Organizations under contract with the City are responsible for fulfilling the agreements in their contract. If a provider believes alternative arrangements need to be established as a result of the Novel Coronavirus, they should discuss with their City contracting agency. We are supporting City agencies with information and guidance, appreciating that this is a fluid and unique situation. Guidance continues to evolve.

Q9. Will the City reimburse contracted providers for supplies, such as cleaning materials and food, related for the Novel Coronavirus?

Most City contracts cover costs related to facility cleaning. If additional protocols are necessary and you believe costs fall outside of your budget, please discuss with your contracting City agency. Please document all costs for Coronavirus precautions and response.

Q10. Can we allow employees to work from home, even if the City contract stipulates otherwise? What about work-related travel?

To the extent practicable, employers should make accommodations for employees working at home because they are required to do so under CDC and DOHMH protocols. Flexibility in contracts will be permissible on a case by case basis, as appropriate and determined by the contracting City agency.

Q11. For employees that are required to enter client homes (i.e. home-visiting, home delivered meals), can alternative protocols be developed?

For employees who provide services that necessitate close contact (within 6 feet for a prolonged period of time) with individuals in home settings, please see guidance on nyc.gov and nyc.gov/health/coronavirus.