



## **COVID-19: Guidance for Public Health Home Service Providers**

This guidance is based on the best information currently available and will be updated when appropriate. Please visit [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus) [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus) for updates.

This guidance is intended for public health workers and others who make home visits or provide other services to individuals in a home or community setting. This general safety guidance relates to the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

### **Client Assessment Prior to Visit**

- Communicate with the client ahead of a scheduled visit, either by telephone, text message, or video conference, if you can.
- If possible, conduct the entire visit virtually, either by phone or video conference.
- Ask client to report their temperature by phone or show it to you via video conferencing.
- If you plan to visit in person, ask the client beforehand if they, or a member of the household, have a fever or symptoms, including cough or shortness of breath.

### **Recommended Action**

- If you are unable to reach the client ahead of the visit, conduct the first contact with them at least six feet away and outdoors or outside the residence, such as in a hallway, if feasible.
  - Ask the client if they, or a member of the household, have a fever or symptoms including cough or shortness of breath.
  - You can instruct the client to check their own temperature. Then report the result. A fever is a temperature greater than 100° Fahrenheit and 37.8° Celsius.
- If the client or household members have no fever or concerning symptoms (such as a cough or shortness of breath), proceed with the scheduled service under standard operating procedures.

- If the client or household members have a fever or concerning symptoms, such as a cough or shortness of breath, adhere to the following:
  - For all NON-CRITICAL services, reschedule until after the client has been fever-free (without medication for fevers) for at least 24 hours and symptoms have improved.
  - For all CRITICAL services that cannot be postponed, use all recommended personal protective equipment (PPE).

### **Recommended PPE for a Home Where You Suspect COVID-19**

- A single pair of disposable patient examination gloves. Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated.
- Disposable isolation gown
- Respiratory protection (such as N-95 or higher-level respirator if available, otherwise use a facemask)
- Eye protection (such as goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face)

### **Guidance for PPE Use in the Home**

- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before putting on and after removing PPE.
- Put on PPE outside of the home prior to entering the home. If you can't put it all on before you enter the home, put on face protection if you can. Face protection includes a respirator if available; otherwise a facemask, plus eye protection.
- Alert those in the home that you will be entering the home and ask them to move to a different room, if possible, or keep a six-foot distance in the same room. Once the entry area is clear, enter the home and put on a gown and gloves.
- Conduct the interview in the area with best ventilation (such as outdoors, outside the residence such as in an apartment hallway if feasible, or in the largest room available.)
- If you have surgical masks available (not N95 masks), please have the client wear one.
- Make the indoor visit as brief as necessary to accomplish the purpose of the visit.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after an interview/visit.

- Ask the client if an external trash can is present at the home, or if one can be left outside for the disposal of PPE.
- Remove PPE outside of the home and discard in an external trash can before departing the location. Don't transport worn PPE in your vehicle.
- If you are unable to remove all PPE outside of the home, keep your face protection (such as respirator and eye protection) on after exiting the home.
- If you need to remove your gown and gloves in the home, ask residents to move to a different room, if possible, or keep a six-foot distance in the same room. Once the entry area is clear, remove the gown and gloves and exit the home.
- Once outside the home, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, remove face protection and discard PPE by placing in external trash can before departing the location. Clean your hands with sanitizer again.

### **Guidance for Positive COVID-19 Cases**

If **after entering** the home there is someone who has fever, cough, or shortness of breath who reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19, have travelled from a COVID-19-affected geographic area or have been in contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days, that staff member should:

- Immediately exit the home.
- Clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Notify their supervisor.

**Because the novel coronavirus (the virus that causes COVID-19) response is rapidly changing, this is interim guidance.**

### **Reliable Information Sources**

Find up-to-date novel coronavirus information at [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus), and on DSHS's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @TexasDSHS. Also visit the CDC's website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus).