NYC
Health

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Safety and Health Guidance for Non-Healthcare Workers Working for NYC Government

This report is provided "as is" for informational purposes only. The NYC Health Department does not provide any warranties of any kind regarding any information contained within.

Note: This guidance is intended for non-healthcare workers working for NYC government. It may be modified as other available information and/or guidance warrants. For educators, first responders and healthcare workers working for NYC government, if an employee presents a danger of infection to others, they will be contacted by the Health Department if testing is needed.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019)
Health officials are still learning about the spread and severity of a novel (new) coronavirus. The infection, called COVID-19, can be spread from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Guard Against Stigma
A lot of information about COVID-19 on social media and even in some news reports is not based on facts. NYC agency staff can help prevent the stigmatization or targeting of one group of people by proactively sharing the messages found in this document and only obtaining information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department, the CDC, and the World Health Organization. There is absolutely no excuse for using the outbreak as a way to spread racism and discrimination. Staff should stay informed, remain vigilant and take care of each other. For more information, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Transmission
Coronaviruses, such as COVID-19, most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:
- Respiratory droplets by coughing or sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

General Infection Prevention Strategies
NYC government employees are encouraged to routinely employ infection prevention strategies to reduce transmission of common respiratory viruses (e.g., influenza or the common cold).
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your heath more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- 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 routine use of these infection prevention strategies cannot be overemphasized, especially washing your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

Face Masks for Non-Healthcare Workers
In line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Department does not recommend the routine use of masks if you are healthy. At this time, face masks are not warranted for general/routine tasks by staff – even those who have frequent interaction with the general public. It is important to note that individuals wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or have been directed by their healthcare provider to do so. In addition, some staff may be required to use either facemasks or N95 respirators depending on the type of visit, or per their organization's protocol for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use facemasks or N95 respirators per usual. No coronavirus-specific precautions are recommended for interactions with the general public, including people showing no symptoms who have visited affected parts of the world.

Cleaning of Public/Common Areas in Non-Healthcare Facilities
If work activities require cleaning of lobbies and other common areas in public spaces and there is concern over COVID-19, more frequent cleaning of "high-touch" areas can help support infection control measures. For information, please visit "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) General Disinfection Guidance for Non-Healthcare" or "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) General Disinfection Guidance for Commercial or Residential Buildings".

Information about Medical Care for Staff
- Staff should stay home and call their doctor if they have cold or flu symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever or sore throat.
- If they do not feel better in 24-48 hours, they should seek care from their doctor.
- Staff should avoid going out in public. They should not go to work until they have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- If they need help getting medical care, staff should call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.