

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM EXPOSURE?

- If possible, maintain a distance of **at least 6 feet**.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Practice frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.**
- **Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone you think might have COVID-19 to a healthcare facility.**
- **Ensure only trained personnel wearing appropriate protective equipment (PPE) have contact with individuals who have or may have COVID-19.**
- **Learn your employer's plan for exposure control and participate in all-hands training on the use of PPE for respiratory protection**, if available.

RECOMMENDED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Law enforcement who must make contact with individuals confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 should follow [CDC's Interim Guidance for EMS](#). Different styles of PPE may be necessary to perform operational duties. These alternative styles (i.e., coveralls) must provide protection that is at least as great as that provided by the minimum amount of PPE recommended.

The minimum PPE recommended is:

- **A single pair of disposable examination gloves**
- **Disposable isolation gown or single-use/disposable overalls***
- **Any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator** (i.e., N-95 or higher-level respirator), or facemask if that is not available.
- **Eye protection** (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face)



*If unable to wear a disposable gown or coveralls because it limits access to duty belt and gear, ensure duty belt and gear are disinfected after contact with individual.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

- **Encourage respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Encourage frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds preferred or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, work stations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2#main-content> for a list of disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2 from the EPA.
- **Assess the need for visitation restrictions**, if near an urban area or location where a member of the public was identified as being infected by COVID-19.
- **Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors not to visit if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.**
- **Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.**
- **Assess inmates' symptoms of respiratory infection upon admission to the facility.** Implement appropriate infection prevention practices for incoming symptomatic inmates

IF CLOSE CONTACT OCCURS DURING APPREHENSION

- Clean and disinfect duty belt and gear prior to reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label.
- Follow standard operating procedures for the containment and disposal of used PPE.
- Follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes. Avoid shaking the clothes.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 BETWEEN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

- **Notify facilities prior to transferring an inmate with an acute respiratory illness**, including suspected or confirmed COVID-19, to a higher level of care.
- Report any possible COVID-19 illness in inmates and employees to the local health department.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 guidance for law enforcement personnel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>
- CDC COVID-19 strategies for long-term care facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>