



## Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for shelter service settings providers

This information is intended to help shelter service setting providers reduce the risk of exposure to illnesses including COVID-19. Shelter service settings may include temporary housing, shared living spaces or other services for people who are experiencing homelessness or who are underhoused (e.g. shelters, respite sites, drop-in centres etc.).

This document provides recommendations for staff/volunteers, visitors as well as clients who rely on these settings for housing, support programs, food and other services.

## Precautions in response to COVID-19:

- ✓ Post [screening sign](#) at all entrances and screen.
- ✓ Screening will reduce the spread of COVID-19 transmission in the community. If a staff, visitor, volunteer or a client has been exposed to COVID-19 or is symptomatic (e.g. cough, fever, difficulty breathing) have this person contact Durham Health Connection Line immediately for further direction.
- ❖ Durham Health Connection Line 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 for a Public Health Nurse.
- ✓ Ensure you have a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) – disposable gloves, gowns, eye/facial protection and masks.
- ✓ Provide client(s) with a mask if they have respiratory symptoms and keep them [isolated](#) (e.g. single room, away from others at least 2 m distance, avoid common areas, designate a separate washroom, etc.).
- ✓ Practice good social distancing whenever possible (keep 2 m distance from others).

## General steps to reduce the transmission of illness:

- ✓ The Health Department recommends getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ✓ Monitor clients for symptoms of illness and support them in accessing appropriate healthcare as needed.
- ✓ Ill staff and volunteers should notify their supervisors when ill.
- ✓ If staff, volunteers, visitors become ill onsite, they should isolate immediately and go home.
- ✓ Ill staff and volunteers should stay home until they are symptom-free, plus an additional 24 hours being symptom-free prior to returning to work.
- ✓ Practice proper hand hygiene by following proper [handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#) methods.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



- ✓ Post hand hygiene signs in visible locations (i.e. washrooms, above sinks, dispenser holders).
- ✓ Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) onsite should have an alcohol concentration between 70%- 90%.
- ✓ Offer supervised hand hygiene for clients prior to meals and encourage frequent hand hygiene.
- ✓ Check liquid hand soap, paper towels and ABHR dispensers regularly to ensure continuous provision. Single-use, disposable products are preferred. If using refillable dispensers, ensure they are cleaned first followed by disinfection between refills.
- ✓ Post [Stop the spread of germs](#) and [Cover your Cough](#) posters in visible locations onsite.
- ✓ Practice proper respiratory etiquette (e.g. cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue and not your hands followed by appropriate hand hygiene).
- ✓ [Clean and disinfect](#) environmental and commonly touched surfaces routinely and more often when someone is ill. Commonly touched surfaces include door knobs, light switches, handrails, faucets, keyboards, phones, etc.
- ✓ Do not share items that come into contact with the mouth or nose such as eating/drinking utensils, drug-use equipment, cigarettes/smoking devices.
- ✓ Personal grooming items should not be shared such as combs, brushes, toothbrushes, shaving equipment, nail cutters, etc.
- ✓ Contact the Health Department for assistance and guidance if you suspect that there may be an outbreak of illness occurring.

## Additional Resources:

- ✓ Durham Region Health Department is routinely updating [COVID-19 online resources](#). Please check for up-to-date resources and information
- ✓ [Facts About Novel Coronavirus COVID-19](#)
- ✓ [Facts About Novel Coronavirus Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Home](#)
- ✓ [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- ✓ [Cleaning and disinfection schedule](#) (use as applicable)
- ✓ [Durham Region's Housing and Homelessness](#)
- ✓ Contact the Health Department to obtain a shelter service settings information package

## References:

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Interim Guidance for Homelessness Service Settings Providers, Toronto Public Health, March 9, 2020

CENTRES FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC), *Interim Guidance for Homeless Shelters*. March 9, 2020. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html>

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