**Milwaukee Shelter and Transitional Housing Task Force  
Shelter Prevention Procedure for Covid 19 Issues  
3/13/20**

**2-1-1 Shelter Requests**

All referrals will be asked the following as it relates to themselves and any family member coming to shelter:

* Have you been in contact with someone who is sick?
* Do you have a fever? Do you have a cough? Any other flu like symptoms?
* Have you had any contact with someone with known Coronavirus in the last month? Have you traveled out of the state or internationally?

If they answer yes to any of these questions they will be instructed that they must put on masks or cover their faces as instructed immediately upon arrival to Shelter. Intake staff will give them further instruction as far as specifics to that location.

**Shelter Intake**

Upon arrival to shelter all family members will be asked the following questions:

* Have you been in contact with someone who is sick?
* Do you have a fever? Do you have a cough? Any other flu like symptoms?
* Have you had any contact with someone with known Coronavirus in the last month? Have you traveled out of the state or internationally?

If yes, will be instructed that the individual with symptoms will be given a mask immediately upon arrival and will need to wear it. Shelter staff will offer further instructions on specifics with regard to times, locations, etc. individualized to specific shelter set up.

All soft items someone has will be dried following normal bedbug procedure upon arrival. Staff should wear gloves while handling all items and should wash hands immediately upon completion of task. Heat will also kill the virus.   
  
Here are the precise instructions from the CDC to care for clothing, towels, linens, and other items that go in the laundry:

* Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry or any items belonging to
* an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other household purposes. [Clean hands](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) immediately after gloves are removed.
  + If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards following proper hand wash procedures.
  + If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
  + Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people’s items.
  + Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

**Shelter Stay**

Anyone that develops a cough or a fever during their shelter stay will be required to wear a mask or equivalent face covering upon onset of symptoms. Shelter staff will instruct individual on specific masking protocol for that agency.

Guests are required to wear the masks or equivalent face covering until they are 24 hours cough, phlegm, and fever free without the use of medications.

If someone develops symptoms while staying in a shelter, once they are masked, staff will call the health department COVID 19 Hotline at 414-286-6800.

Before calling the hotline, staff will determine the following:

* Clients temperature
* If there are any underlying health or respiratory issues

Additionally, once the public health nurse answers the phone, staff will communicate that individual is staying in a congregate living facility. They will then place the phone on speaker to allow the guest to communicate through their mask. All area around the phone and the phone itself should be sanitized at the end of the call following individual shelter policy.

The public nurse answering the phone will offer further instruction on testing, quarantining, etc.

Each agency will need to develop their own quarantine procedure that includes bathroom use, food accessibility, etc. Please keep in mind that the less guests access any common area or staff the better it is. Agency should make sure staff and guests are aware of these policies.

Upon completion of this phone call, phone and area will be sanitized using a bleach solution or other appropriate disinfectant as instructed by agency.

Disinfecting Shelter Facilities

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

**Options include:**

* **Diluting your household bleach.**  
  To make a bleach solution, mix:
  + 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water  
    OR
  + 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer’s instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

* **Alcohol solutions.**Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.

Staffing and Shelter Operations

To ensure 24 coverage, shelters may want to extend hours or hire additional temporary staff. Current staff should be cross trained to cover three fund basic elements of shelter services: meal service, house management, and maintenance. Nonessential staff may work from home or stay home and rotate into basic service roles.   
  
Case Management services may be reconfigured if there is an order for people to remain indoors for a specific time. Case Managers can assist with basic shelter functions and coordinate efforts with other agencies when needed. Any changes to Case Management services will be made with the understanding that many of populations we deal with will continue to face trauma.

Staff displaying symptoms at work should immediately wear a mask and call the health department COVID 19 Hotline at 414-286-6800. Staff displaying symptoms at home should inform their supervisor as soon as possible and call the health department COVID 19 Hotline.

Meal time should be staggered so that fewer people are congregating at one time. Group time should be limited. Plan to have easy to prepare food on hand to last several weeks.

Client Education and Communication

Shelter staff should post materials for client information in several areas of the shelter on the following topics and in appropriate languages:

⏵COVID 19 Basic Information  
⏵Proper Handwashing Technique  
⏵Healthy Cough Habits  
⏵How to Report Symptoms of COVID 19

These same topics should also be discussed with clients to make sure they understand the risk, symptoms, and protocol.

Client bathrooms should be equipped with hand soap, drying materials, and hand washing instructions. Hand sanitizer and facial tissues should be made available in common areas of the shelter.

Discharge

In the event that you see an uptick in individuals leaving shelter for places outdoors, can you send the information to [outreach@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:outreach@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

Please Note

This is only a prevention policy. A containment policy will be forthcoming.

RESOURCES  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/index.html>

<https://www.usich.gov/news/planning-and-preparing-for-covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Infectious-Disease-Toolkit-for-CoCs-Preventing-and-Managing-the-Spread-of-Infectious-Disease-within-Shelters.pdf>

<https://health.mcleancountyil.gov/723/COVID-19-Myth-Busters>