

Shelters

1. What's the status of shelter space to maintain appropriate social distancing in shelters?

The City of San Diego, Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH), and the County of San Diego are partnering to utilize the Convention Center as an emergency shelter. The County is also partnering with RTFH to provide limited hotel/motel capacity for those most at risk. When capacity is full or for people experiencing homelessness outside the Central region, contact 2-1-1.

2. How should shelters ensure appropriate spacing?

CDC recommends spacing all beds/mats at least 6 feet apart and arranging them in a head-to-toe manner. The more distance between people the lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others. Learn more at [CDC Guidance on Essential Services for Encampments](#). For agencies with multiple sites, recommend using one location for people who are sick with respiratory illness or with COVID-19 and another location for people who do not have symptoms and continue to separate all beds/mats by 6 feet.

3. How will shelter staff be able to distinguish between COVID-19, a cold, or the flu? If someone with COVID-19 symptoms presents at the shelter, is it safe for them to stay the night and get connected to care the next day?

Shelter staff will not be able to tell the difference between COVID-19 or another type of respiratory illness. All clients should be screened with the [Universal Screening Tool](#). There are many reasons other than COVID-19 that someone might have a cough including underlying health conditions, allergies, pneumonia, influenza or the common cold. Refer to basic infection prevention recommendations provided at www.coronavirus-sd.com to help limit the spread of disease regardless of what is causing the illness. For any person with COVID-19 symptoms, immediately ask the person to wear a mask, encourage good hand hygiene and inform them they will need to be isolated from the rest of the shelter guests. Contact the 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line. Once the individual is connected to a healthcare provider, the provider will coordinate with the County to place them in a hotel room for isolation, if needed.

4. If someone from a shelter tests positive for COVID, will the shelter staff be notified of the results?

Shelters will be notified under HIPPA compliant guidance about anyone with lab confirmed positive COVID-19 disease who is identified as needing to be isolated. Public health will initiate an investigation, including identifying anyone with similar illnesses and close contacts of the person who has a confirmed test result. Adhere to guidance on how to clean and disinfect your facility. Some people awaiting COVID-19 test results may be isolated until the test results are known; the County has hotel/motel rooms available to assist with these efforts.

5. Are there any shelter providers open for intake or waitlist? Are shelters doing new intakes? Is there shelter available for the homeless that are not at risk or do not have symptoms?

Please call 2-1-1 for up-to-date information on shelter capacity throughout the County or assist the person in being assessed at one of the [Homeless Access Sites](#). It varies by each shelter and their plans to

ensure appropriate physical distancing within their setting. Each program is adapting to the unique physical environment of their organization in order to comply with Public Health Orders. The best course of action to get more information on when new intakes will be accepted is to reach out to shelters directly. People who are asymptomatic may continue to access homeless resources similar to how they would in the past. There are no additional resources for homeless that are not at risk or do not have symptoms.

- 6. Will day centers remain open so that people who are unsheltered have somewhere to go during the day? Emergency shelters may solely provide overnight accommodations so in the morning guests leave. What is the recommendation for those staying at a shelter who have to leave during the day? Are shelters and providers advised to take temperatures of guests as part of screening and reentry to shelter?**

Funding Agencies will determine if day centers will remain open and staffing requirements. The County recommends temperature check and hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or hand sanitizer when re-entering the facility. Shelters and homeless service providers should use the [Universal Screening Tool](#). If the individual screens as needing further evaluation and has a medical provider, please assist them in accessing their medical provider. If a person does not have a current medical provider, call the 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line.

- 7. Are nurses going to the shelters to conduct screenings?**

Public health nurses have been conducting screenings at shelters for COVID-19. The screening tool is available (see link in above question). There is an Outreach and Shelter Protocol developed by HHS and Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) to provide shelter providers with guidance as they continue to deliver essential services to the homeless population. It can also be found at www.coronavirus-sd.com or on the RTFH resource library at www.rtfhsd.org.

- 8. What will become of the former bridge shelter tents?**

The bridge shelters have been an essential component of the City's shelter system. When the pandemic subsides to a level that allows public health officials to lift the restrictions on social distancing or provide other ongoing guidance about how to use congregate care facilities going forward, the City will determine whether they will be continued, ensuring that people receive support services such as housing assistance and healthcare support.

- 9. What resources are available in areas that do not have shelters?**

If people want to remain in the area where they are experiencing homelessness, the existing resources in that area are available for them as they have been; 2-1-1 has the most current listing of shelter locations.