

COVID-19 Outbreak

Guidance for Homeless Service Providers



What is a COVID-19 outbreak?

Updated May 2024

A COVID-19 outbreak in a non-healthcare congregate setting (like a shelter) is:

- **5 or more** people **or** at least **20%** of people in a core group* test positive for COVID-19.
- **And** they test positive or their symptoms start within **7 days** of each other.
- **And** they are in close contact or work together (e.g., work in the same shift or building, share transportation or housing).
- **And** the virus was not more likely to have spread in a different setting (e.g., household).

**A core group is a set of people who regularly interact, like in an office, building, or sleeping space.*

Outbreak status continues until 14 days after the last positive test.

- Non-essential outside services like vaccine clinics may resume once the facility has 2 consecutive weeks of negative test results.
- A shelter guest who tested positive for COVID-19 and who has completed their required isolation period (typically 10 days) may return to the shelter before outbreak status ends.
- DOH and the CDC recommend that, if possible, shelters close to new admissions if you identify new COVID cases within the past 14 days.
 - However, if conditions outside the shelter seriously threaten the safety of potential guests like extreme weather events, new admissions may continue regardless of outbreak status.

If you have a client or guest who tests positive for COVID-19 or suspect you have an outbreak at your facility:

- Contact your outbreak investigator if you already have one.
- Call (253) 649-1412 Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to reach an outbreak investigator.
- An outbreak investigator will:
 - Answer your questions.
 - Provide guidance and support.
 - Provide strategies for the shelter to implement to reduce transmission.

If you need assistance with testing, your outbreak investigator can help you.

- You can also email our testing team at epitesting@tpchd.org.

Encourage clients and guests to get vaccinated.

- Find vaccine at tpchd.org/vaxtothefuture.

Contact us for support or with additional questions.

- Call Center is open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday at (253) 649-1412.
- Reach out to Sarah Vallido at svallido@tpchd.org or (253) 878-6396.

Find more information at tpchd.org/coronavirus.