

A GUIDE FOR PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS



This guide is intended to help you protect the health and safety of domestic workers in your home, including protection from COVID-19. Domestic workers provide services such as house cleaning, caregiving (sometimes referred to as “nannies”, “caregivers” or “housekeepers”), gardening, landscaping, or other services. These best practices and recommendations are designed to protect everyone who lives and works in the home. [See also Best Practices to Prevent COVID-19; Guidance for Businesses and Employers.](#)

WHAT TO DO WHEN COVID-19 ENTERS THE HOME

- **Inform Workers of Exposure and Infection.** Inform domestic workers of any COVID-19 exposures, infections, and symptoms occurring with anyone who lives or works in the home, and make sure they’re comfortable sharing the same information with you. Open communication can help everyone take appropriate steps to keep themselves and others safe.
- **Follow Instructions for Close Contacts.** You are a “close contact” if you shared the same indoor airspace with someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while they were infectious. If anyone is exposed to someone with COVID-19, they must monitor their health, get tested for COVID-19, and wear a highly protective mask for 10 days indoors around others. [See Instructions for Close Contacts.](#)

- **Tell Non-essential Domestic Workers to Avoid Entering the Home.** If someone in the home has COVID-19, non-essential domestic workers should not return to work until [isolation instructions](#) say it is okay to do so. If the domestic worker is needed for essential services, they should wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a fitted respirator mask, gloves, and eye protection (face shield or safety goggles) when providing services.



PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

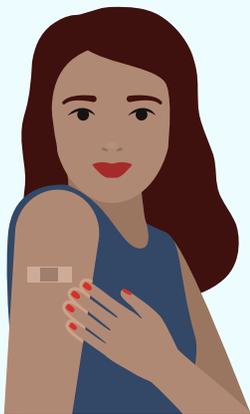


- **Provide Protective Face Masks and Respirators.** COVID-19 is very easily spread to others wearing a [highly protective face mask indoors](#), when around others, is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A highly protective mask has both a good fit and good filtration. Well-fitting respirator masks (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94) provide the best protection. Examples of other protective masks are double masks (wearing a snug cloth mask over a medical mask) and fitted medical masks (such as with the [knot and tuck technique](#)).
- **Share Your Expectations for Mask Wearing.** Encourage everyone who lives or works in the home to use masks around others. It’s important to have extra masks available so workers can replace them as needed. Tell workers where these supplies can be found in the home. Ask workers to tell you when they need more masks. Note that heat and physically demanding work can damage or dirty masks.

PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT



- **Promote Handwashing.** Encourage everyone who lives or works in the home to wash their hands often. Provide enough soap and adequate handwashing facilities. Workers should always wash their hands before and after eating, touching and preparing food, cleaning, playing, putting on a mask, and taking care of a sick person. Ensure workers have time to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds each time. See the Public Health [Guidance on Handwashing](#)
- **Agree to Stay Home and Isolate.** Make agreements if anyone in the home (including the worker) tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms, that they will stay at home and isolate away from others. If they have met the criteria to leave isolation after Day 5 but before Day 11, they will wear a highly protective mask when in a room that others occupy. Follow the [Isolation Instructions](#) for People with COVID-19.
- **Disclose any COVID-19 Illness in Advance.** Make arrangements over a phone call, text, or email before a worker enters your home. Tell workers if anyone in your household, including children, is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, was recently exposed, or has tested positive. Provide as much advance notice as possible so a worker can decide for themselves if they are comfortable with the possible risk of exposure. This will help the worker protect both themselves and any household members who may be at risk of getting very sick from COVID, including the elderly or immunocompromised.



- **Encourage Vaccinations and Boosters.** Encourage workers (and everyone who lives in the home) to stay [up to date](#) with their COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters. Annual flu shots are also encouraged to keep everyone healthy. If possible, provide paid time off for workers to get their recommended doses.
- **Improve Indoor Air Quality.** Bring as much fresh air into your home as possible. Open windows, use fans to blow air out, and use HEPA air purifiers. More resources for improving air quality in your home can be found by visiting [CDC Improving Ventilation in Your Home](#) and [CDPH COVID Indoor Air Quality](#) webpages.
- **Prepare Materials and Tools.** Provide appropriate and well-maintained supplies and equipment to perform tasks. This includes step stools, ladders, mops, buckets, sponges, dusters, gloves, and any other materials needed to do work safely. Tell work-

ers where these supplies can be found in the home. Ask workers to tell you when they need more supplies. Provide EPA approved cleaning products and pesticides. For more information, please visit [EPA Safer Choice Program](#), [CDPH Cleaning Products](#), and [EPA's Lawn and Garden for Consumers](#).

- **Prepare Safe Areas for Breaks.** Inform workers of safe and well-ventilated areas for meal and rest breaks (shaded if outdoors).
- **Offer Educational Resources.** Place up to date educational materials in visible places, in the worker's preferred language. COVID-19 resources in different languages can be found on the [DPH COVID-19 page](#). Include work-related educational materials like [how to correctly sanitize and disinfect](#). Make sure workers know to never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.
- **Know the Signs of Heat Illness.** Symptoms of heat illness may be the same as symptoms of COVID-19, including high body temperature and headaches. During very hot days, workers should have more rest breaks, drink plenty of fresh water and change face masks more often to avoid heat illnesses. If working outdoors, more water, rest, and shade are needed. On extremely hot days, consider offering a flexible work schedule. For more information, please check the [Heat Related Illnesses](#) and [Ready LA County Extreme Heat](#) webpages.

COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS



- **Agree to Fees and Services.** Discuss in advance the rate of pay, number of hours to be worked, and any other details, including how workers will be paid, and required tasks. Contactless pay is encouraged, which can include leaving payment in an agreed upon location in the home.
- **Tell Workers Who Else Will be in the Home.** Tell workers who else will be in the house while they are there (e.g., other workers, visitors, family), and any possible interaction they can expect.
- **Make an Emergency Plan.** Share your home's emergency plan, including the best way to reach you or another trusted person in case of an emergency. To create an emergency plan for your home, follow recommendations and templates from [Ready.gov website](https://www.ready.gov). If you won't be home during the workers' shift, tell them how to reach you in case of an emergency and how they should communicate any issues that come up during their shift.
- **Communicate Any Work-Related Symptoms or Injuries.** Encourage open communication about COVID-19 symptoms or any work-related injuries, especially during or after cleaning with harsh chemicals or doing repetitive and physically demanding work. These may include coughing, sneezing, headaches, dizziness, skin or eye burns, nosebleeds, shortness of breath, and wheezing. For more information, see [OSHA Cleaning Chemicals and Your Health](#). If a worker develops symptoms or is injured on the job, the employer may be required to pay for medical attention. For more information, please visit [California's Department of Workers Compensation](#) webpage.
- For more health and safety information for Domestic Workers, please visit the [Cal OSHA website](#).



Please scan the QR Code to visit the DPH website where you can view this document and access the links.