

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Congregate Settings: Law Enforcement Notification Protocol

This document provides information that residential, shelter, interim housing, adult residential facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and other congregate settings can use to develop their own policies to ensure that symptomatic and presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive cases abide by necessary isolation requirements to maintain the health and safety of staff and other residents. The below guidance is intended to serve as a resource as congregate settings consider policies and procedures in instances when individuals in congregate settings are not complying with transmission precautions, show intent to expose others to COVID-19, and/or engage in assaultive behavior that potentially endangers other clients.

Strategies to consider in developing policies and procedures

1. As a first step, onsite staff should attempt to understand and de-escalate the situation. This is often best accomplished by maintaining a calm demeanor and using motivational interviewing techniques to avoid direct confrontation, develop discrepancy between the client's goals and current actions to increase awareness of the consequences of their behaviors, and support client autonomy while steering them toward the desired behavior. Consider contacting law enforcement for clients who pose an imminent physical threat to staff or others.
 - a. Ensure a clear understanding of client concerns so staff can attempt to address the issue(s) leading to an inability or reluctance to follow isolation requirements.
 - b. Offer available support and/or appropriate incentives that might convince the client to remain onsite and comply with isolation requirements. Possible examples include comfort items, clinically indicated medication-assisted treatment (MAT) or sedatives, or other services or privileges that can be offered by clinical staff.
 - c. Determine if an available mental health professional or trusted friend or family member can engage the client to attempt to further de-escalate.
 - d. Have staff remind the client about the requirements of the Health Officer Order to follow isolation protocols and provide a written copy of the Order, if helpful. The order can be accessed [here](#) or through the Department of Public Health COVID webpage: <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - e. If appropriate and possible, consider whether an alternate site might be a more appropriate setting for the individual (e.g., higher acuity facility, site with more services to address the client's specific needs).
 - f. Determine whether these less restrictive alternatives have convinced the client to comply with the requirements of the Health Officer Order.
2. If the client cannot be convinced to remain onsite and does not exhibit aggressive and/or dangerous behavior, consider whether the client can be permitted to leave the facility. If client is permitted to leave the facility, consider giving the client a written copy of the Health Officer Order and reminding the client of their legal obligation to not expose others. Encourage the client to return to the facility should they change their mind. If considering use of forced restraint, develop plans to in accordance with California Occupational Health and Safety Standards for application of personal protective equipment, including use of surgical masks and gloves for employees.
3. If the client threatens to intentionally transmit COVID-19 or exhibits assaultive behavior and is imminently planning on leaving the facility, call 911 and contact security staff that may be onsite. Be sure to notify the 911 operator that the individual of concern is presumed or confirmed to have COVID-19 so that law enforcement can wear appropriate protective equipment upon arrival.

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- a. Once onsite, law enforcement can assist staff in further attempts to de-escalate.
- b. If de-escalation efforts are successful, consider allowing the client to remain at the site or to leave as per section 2 above.
- c. If de-escalation is not successful and when deemed appropriate by law enforcement, law enforcement actions may be initiated, which may include transporting and booking the client.
- d. Consider meeting with local law enforcement to discuss these steps and develop a joint plan for response in such events.