

# COVID-19 Guidance for Residential Buildings

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## Background

Under [Governor Pritzker's March 20 Stay at Home Executive Order](#), building management and maintenance is an essential service and may continue. Residents should be staying at home as much as possible to prevent the spread of illness, but may continue to travel to seek essential services, to work if they are an essential employee or to have in-home services or food deliveries. Landlords and building management should take steps to help decrease the spread of COVID-19 in Chicago.

This document provides guidance for multifamily residential buildings. If your building is a senior living facility, assisted living facility or other congregate setting for vulnerable populations, you should refer to [CDPH's Guidance for Congregate Living Facilities](#).

## Safety Measures Building Owners and Managers Should Follow to prevent COVID-19 Transmission among Residents and Employees

### Perform routine environmental cleaning:

- Make sure that common areas such as lobbies, elevators, laundry rooms and stairwells are frequently cleaned and disinfected.
- Clean and disinfect daily all frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, stairway railings, elevator buttons, reception desks, push plates and laundry room equipment.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available at [epa.gov](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

### Implement policies and practices for social distancing:

- Increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and residents (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters). Building staff and occupants should maintain social distancing when getting packages or mail, and when entering or exiting the building.
  - In a large building where packages may be left in the lobby or with front desk staff, building staff may consider assisting building occupants by dropping deliveries outside of their door.
  - Some delivery services (for example, Uber Eats, FreshDirect, Amazon) also have a section for "special instructions" where individuals can enter more information and requests, for example, that packages be delivered to the door, or to text/call and leave packages at the door in an effort to minimize person-to-person contact and touching of surfaces.
- Postpone non-urgent maintenance or showings. Open houses and showings of occupied rental properties are not permitted. Any staff or other people entering a unit should wash their hands, maintain social distancing and clean and disinfect work areas afterwards.

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- Close or limit access to common areas such as gyms, party rooms, lounges, and swimming pools as these are areas where it may become difficult to maintain social distancing.
  - Residents can continue to use shared laundry rooms. If the room is small, building management should consider posting signage and limiting the number of people using the laundry room at the same time to ensure social distancing.
- Limit the number of people getting into elevators at the same time to avoid crowding. People should consider only riding the elevator with members of their own household, taking the stairs, or waiting for the next elevator.

**Promote enhanced respiratory and hand hygiene:**

- Make sure that all handwashing sinks in the common areas have clean running water, soap and paper towels at all times. Building staff and others entering and leaving should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after cleaning. They should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues and no-touch receptacles in common areas (for example, lobby, bathrooms, laundry rooms, gyms and playrooms) to encourage hand hygiene among building occupants.
- Place signs that encourage cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick in entrances and other common areas as appropriate.

## Recommended Procedures If a Resident is Sick or Tests Positive for COVID-19

It is important to note that there is community-wide transmission of COVID-19 in Chicago. This means the risk of contracting COVID-19 is no longer only tied to high-risk travel or potential exposures at school or work. All Chicago residents should stay home as much as possible, consider themselves possibly exposed, and self-monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing). Residents are not required to self-report to building management if they are sick or test positive for COVID-19. **The most effective measures** building owners and managers can take to prepare for possible exposure and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among residents and employees are social distancing and routine environmental cleaning.

- The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) will not notify building owners or occupants of residents testing positive for COVID-19 and management does not need to notify CDPH of positive residents.
- Landlords and building management do not need to notify other occupants if a building resident is sick with COVID-19. With widespread community transmission, many people will get sick and recover at home.
- Most people with COVID-19 will have mild illness and won't need to be hospitalized. They should stay home and away from others. See [CDPH's recommended precautions for individuals who are sick or diagnosed with COVID-19](#).
- If an ill building occupant needs emergency assistance, call 911.

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## Recommended Procedures If an Employee is Sick or Tests Positive for COVID-19

- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e. cough, difficulty breathing) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees, residents, and visitors and sent home immediately.
- Employees who are sick should stay home and not return to work until:
  - at least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared; and,
  - at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed their fever has resolved (i.e. no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications) and their other symptoms have improved.
  - *For example, if you have a fever and coughing for 7 days, you need to stay home 3 more days with no fever for a total of 10 days. Or, if you have a fever and coughing for 8 days, you need to stay home 3 more days with no fever for a total of 11 days.*
- Employees who are sick must follow [CDPH-recommended steps](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available), throw out the tissue, and wash their hands or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days and monitor their symptoms. They should notify their supervisor and refer to [CDPH's recommended precautions for exposed individuals](#).
- Management should not require test results or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection:
  - Inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing).
  - Direct close contacts of the employee to stay home and monitor their health for 14 days. Do not require close contacts to have negative test results prior to returning to work.
  - Critical infrastructure workers who have been exposed to COVID-19 can continue to work as long as they don't develop any COVID-19 symptoms. They should monitor their health and take extra precautions when around others, like wearing a facemask and maintaining at least 6ft distance. See [CDPH Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#).
  - Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the building. Follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).
  - Ensure staffs' privacy to help prevent discrimination.
  - Refer employees in need of mental health support to the [NAMI Chicago](#) helpline at 833-NAMI-CHI (833-626-4244) for a listening ear, mental health information or referrals.

## Repairs and Maintenance

- Cancel or postpone non-urgent repairs.
- Before entering a unit, ask the occupants if they are sick. If they are sick, reschedule or take special precautions.
- Building occupant should maintain social distancing while the work is being done, and clean and disinfect work areas afterwards.
- Building staff should clean their hands thoroughly before entering the unit and after they leave.

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## Real Estate Open Houses and Showings

Under [Governor Pritzker's March 20 Stay at Home Executive Order](#), open houses are not permitted. Showings of occupied rental properties are not permitted. Showings of vacant or owner-occupied units are permitted if necessary and scheduled in advance (virtual showings are preferred) but limited to no more than 4 people.

## Helpful Contacts and Websites

**Cook County Sheriff's Office** - The Cook County Sheriff's Office has suspended all court ordered evictions. For more information, see [www.cookcountysheriff.org](http://www.cookcountysheriff.org).

**Rents Rights** - Call the Chicago Rents Right Hotline at **312-742-RENT** for information and assistance related to the obligations and rights of renters and property owners.

**Guidance Businesses and Employers** – For more detailed information about maintaining a safe environment, preventing the spread of disease and preparing for potential workplace exposure see CDPH's [Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

**COVID-19 Information** – For information on Chicago's COVID-19 response, visit [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus), email [coronavirus@chicago.gov](mailto:coronavirus@chicago.gov), or call 312-746-4835. For additional information and resources, visit the [CDC COVID-19 website](#).

**Health Care Assistance for Uninsured** – People who don't have a provider or medical insurance, can call the nearest community health center and they will help them coordinate care. Find a community health center at [findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov).

**Mental Health Support** - Refer employees and residents in need of mental health support to the [NAMI Chicago](#) helpline at 833-NAMI-CHI (833-626-4244) for a listening ear, mental health information or referrals.

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