



## **Public Health Region 8 Advisory Guidance for Preventing Transmission of COVID-19 in the Workplace**

The United States and Texas are experiencing the spread of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease COVID-19. These guidelines are geared toward offices and businesses to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their facility. Prevention, recognition and management of outbreaks in the community is important to prevent spread of the disease.

### **Prevention of Outbreaks**

COVID-19 may spread through both symptomatic or asymptomatic transmission. For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is important to:

- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled using soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.
- Practice social distancing by ensuring people remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Recognize personal risk factors. [According to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), certain people, including older adults and those with underlying conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.
- Take steps to limit the spread of the potentially infectious respiratory secretions, by wearing facemasks.

### **Recommendations for Reducing the Risk of Transmission**

- Implement mandatory hand hygiene.
- Stagger break times and lunch times to minimize contact between team members.
- Place physical 6-foot markings on work benches, tables, conveyor, and/or assembly lines for distance markers.
- Make clustering a safety violation.
- Place physical barriers between work stations, where possible.
- Eliminate all non-essential meetings, huddles, and conferences.
- Daily temperature and symptom screening.
- Ask sick employees to stay home and review current sick leave policies.
- Increase frequency of cleaning.
- Implement contactless delivery processes.
- Prohibit close contact from vendors or visitors.
- Post signage to educate employees about COVID-19 and translate materials as needed for all employees.



### Recommendations for Ill Employees

- Employees who have [symptoms](#) of illness should notify their supervisor and stay home and contact their healthcare provider.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#).
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should 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 employer should instruct fellow employees about how to proceed based on the CDC [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#).

### Testing and Reporting for Sick Employees

Individuals that are sick with COVID-19 symptoms should receive or seek immediate medical attention.

- Testing is available through some commercial labs and public health laboratories. Contact your local health department (LHD) for more information.
- A positive COVID-19 test result must be reported immediately to your local health department (LHD) or, if no LHD exists, to your regional health department.

### REPORT ALL SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES AND/OR OUTBREAKS TO THE LHD IMMEDIATELY.

Health Department	Phone	Fax
DSHS Public Health Region 8	210-949-2121	210-692-1457
Comal County Health Department	830-221-1150	830-643-0329
DeWitt County Health Department	361-275-0920	361-275-0924
San Antonio Metropolitan Health District	210-207-8876	210-207-8807
Victoria County Health Department	361-578-6281	361-485-9062

### Addressing Return to Work

- Individuals who have COVID-19 must follow the instructions of the local or regional health department regarding isolation and when they can be cleared to return to work.
- Individuals who have had contact with someone who has COVID-19 should follow the recommendations of the local or regional health.



**Outbreaks**

- In the event of an outbreak, testing and monitoring decisions will be made in consultation with your local public health authorities.
- Be prepared to maintain a line list (A line list template can be found [here](#)) of all confirmed COVID-19 cases and anyone in close contact with the case(s). Information may include: demographics, job description, and date of symptom onset.

**Current local health authorities in Region 8:**

County	
Atascosa, Bandera, Calhoun, Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Gillespie, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Jackson, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, Kinney, LaSalle, Medina*, Real, Wilson, and Zavala	Health Authority: Lillian Ringsdorf, MD, MPH 7430 Louis Pasteur San Antonio, Texas 78229 Office: (210) 949-2000 Direct: (210) 949-2001 Cell: (210) 265-7444 Fax: (210) 949-2015 *Note: Medina County has a LHD but Dr. Ringsdorf still serves as the LHA
Bexar	San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department Health Authority: C. Junda Woo, MD, MPH 111 Soledad, Suite 1000 San Antonio, Texas 78205 Office: (210) 207-8896 Cell: (210) 725-3100 Fax: (210) 207-8999  Director: Colleen Bridger, MPH, PHD Phone: (210) 207-8780
Comal	Comal County Health Department Health Authority: Dorothy Overman, MD 1297 Church Hill Dr., Ste. 102 New Braunfels, Texas 78130-6114 Office: (830) 221-1150 Direct: (830) 620-7354 Cell: (830) 237-9394 Fax: (830) 643-0329  Director: Cheryl Fraser, RN



DeWitt	Dewitt County Health Department Health Authority: John McNeill, MD 106 North Gonzales St. Cuero, TX 77954 Office: (361) 275-0920 Cell: (361) 550-2234 Fax: (361) 275-0924 Director: David Gonzales Nursing Manager: Lisa Campos, LVN
Lavaca	Local Health Authorities: Timothy Wagner, MD and Ralph Wagner, MD Phone: 361-594-3824 Fax: 361-594-3854
Maverick	Local Health Authority: Victoriano Valdez, MD Phone: 830-968-9452
Medina*	Medina Public Health Nurse: Patricia Melcher, RN, BSN Phone: (830) 741-6191
Uvalde	Health Authority: Jared Reading, MD Phone: 210-995-2052 Uvalde Public Health Nurse: Terri Black, RN Phone: (830) 278-1705
Val Verde	Health Authority: Jaime Javier Gutierrez, MD 400 Pecan Street Del Rio, TX 78860 Phone: 830-765-1760
Victoria	Victoria County Health Department Health Authority: John McNeill, MD 2805 North Navarro Victoria, Texas 77901 Office: (361) 578-6281 Cell: (361) 550-2234 Fax: (361) 578-7046 Other: (361) 573-4100 Urgent Care Ctr: (361) 578-3363   ( Becky/ Admin)  Director: David Gonzales



## **For More Information**

### **Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

### **Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

### **OSHA Guidance - Control and Prevention**

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

### **Evaluating Risk of Exposure**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

### **Specific Industry Guidance:**

[Meat and Poultry Processing Industry](#)

[Retail Food, Restaurants, & Delivery Services](#)

[First Responders and Law Enforcement](#)

[Businesses and Employers](#)

[Correctional and Detention Facilities](#)

[Schools and Child Care Programs](#)

The situation is evolving daily. For ongoing updates, please visit [www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/).

Public Health Region 8 thanks you for all your hard work.

#### For More Information, Contact:

Public Health Region 8

Main Office: 210-949-2000

24-hour reporting line: 210-949-212