



PATH Intl. Precautions for the COVID-19 Outbreak and Beyond

First and foremost, those working with any population must adhere to federal, state, city or county regulations or guidelines. If there are questions on which regulations or guidelines to follow, those that are in place where the facility is located should be adhered to, and if all regulations or guidelines are lifted, then it is recommended to follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Examples of regulations and guidelines in place:

- Shelter-in-place/quarantine mandates/guidelines
- Wearing of facial masks
- Maintaining social distancing guidelines
- Following gathering size guidelines

These regulations or guidelines can be found on the CDC, a State's Department of Public Health and/or city government websites.

Consideration for Participants

As stated on the CDC website, a disability alone may not be related to higher risk for getting COVID-19 or having severe illness. Most people with disabilities are not inherently at higher risk for becoming infected with or having severe illness from COVID-19. However, some people with disabilities might be at a higher risk of infection or severe illness because of underlying medical conditions. All people seem to be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 if they have serious underlying chronic medical conditions. Adults with disabilities are three times more likely than adults without disabilities to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes or cancer.

Based on what is currently known, those at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised
- Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

Alongside the identified high-risk groups listed above, the following populations, if served or interacted with at your center, might be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness:

- People who have limited mobility or who cannot avoid coming into close contact with others who may be infected, such as direct support providers and family members
- People who have trouble understanding information or practicing preventive measures, such as hand washing and social distancing
- People who may not be able to communicate symptoms of illness

Link for high risk conditions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/underlying-conditions.html>

Link for information from CDC on disabilities and COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-disabilities.html>

What Can Centers Do?

- Review PATH Intl. Standard A7 that states, “For the purpose of risk management planning centers have written evidence that general health and safety concerns have been identified and established written procedures to respond are in place.” Although infectious diseases are not specifically mentioned, they do pose a risk to general health and safety. Centers should consider including in their risk management plan how they will handle any infectious disease outbreak. The COVID-19 outbreak is a current concern, but this plan should take into account future situations such as a flu or measles outbreak.
 - For a full list of infectious diseases to consider, go to the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/notifiable/2018/infectious-diseases/>
- Communicate with the participant, parent or caregiver prior to a session to:
 - Verify that there are no underlying health issues that would go against any shelter-in-place mandates.
 - Ask if the participant or anyone within their household do not have symptoms present, such as a fever or cough.
 - Explain how the center is monitoring the health of the staff.
 - Explain how the center is cleaning AND disinfecting equipment and common areas.
 - Explain what they can expect when they arrive, such as hand washing expectations or wearing of masks.
 - Explain how social distancing is going to work within the session or what alternative activities are available.
 - Explain that the center’s risk management plan is available if questions arise.

Links to more information on the CDC website:

Information on people with disabilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-disabilities.html>

Information on people who are at higher risk of severe infection: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Keeping Your Center Healthy

Ensure that you have prepared your work areas according to the CDC recommendations by reducing transmission among employees, maintaining healthy business operations and maintaining a healthy work environment. To help keep your center healthy:

- Encourage anyone coming onto the property who is sick or has someone in the household who is sick to stay home or reschedule. This includes employees, volunteers, participants and their caregivers.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.

- Encourage frequent hand washing; provide soap and water in a space available to all. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your gathering areas and in other common areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Discourage handshaking—encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:
 - Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, doorknobs, stall doors, tack and other commonly used equipment.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
 - Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

Resources specific to the COVID-19 outbreak

Information on preparing your work place: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Information about how to clean tack and/or the facility:

https://aaep.org/sites/default/files/Documents/PreventCOVIDinEquestrianFacilitiesAAEP_0.pdf

Information on when to cancel a large gathering: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>