



TMASF Connects

Coronavirus and Telecommuting Resource Sheet

COVID-19, commonly known as the Coronavirus, has been increasingly present in the SF Bay Area. To assist our members in any way possible, TMA SF Connects has created a fact sheet on best practices for commuting and telecommuting during the outbreak.

What is the Coronavirus?

The Coronavirus is in the family of viruses that cause what is known as the “common cold”. Common symptoms include coughing, fever, and shortness of breath. Early symptoms like these are similar to the flu and the common cold, leaving victims susceptible to more serious illnesses such as pneumonia or bronchitis. The elderly, very young, and those with compromised immune systems are at higher risk, but children tend to be at a lower risk. No vaccines are currently available.

[Click Here](#) for more information about the Coronavirus from the CDC. This [map](#) by Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering shows the severity of the outbreak and is regularly updated with data from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). SF Chronicle has also created a [tracker](#) for all cases in California.

Safety Tips for [Prevention](#)

Below are some of the safety guidelines provided by CDC to help prevent exposure to this virus.

- **Wash** your hands often with soap & water for **at least** 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- If soap and water are not readily available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Stay home when you are sick
- **Cover** your cough or sneeze with a tissue, or your elbow or shoulder if one is not available
- **Clean** and **disinfect frequently** touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- The CDC **does not** recommend that people who are well to wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. They should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.



Do's and Don'ts to prevent Coronavirus

[Source Site](#)

Do:

- Wash your hands together with soap for at least **20 seconds** and keep your hands pointing downwards so dirty water won't run up your sleeves
- Make sure to scrub both your front and back of your hands, including under your nails
- Use disinfectant spray/wipes to clean down your desk at least **once** a week
- Wait at least **10 seconds** before wiping it down
- Wipe everything with a fresh wipe or cloth

Don't:

- Touch faucets or sinks to prevent further contamination
- Leave hands wet, as wet hands are much likely to attract bacteria
- Wipe back-and-forth, wipe in one direction to prevent leaving germs back where you cleaned
- Attempt to dry the surface after disinfecting, let it air dry

Besides making sure we are cleaning properly, using proper cleaning products are just as important. Here is a [list](#) of products that kills up to 99.9% bacteria and viruses.

Transit Agencies

What are local public transit agencies doing in the meantime?

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a professional organization that represents transit agencies. They have created a [Coronavirus factsheet](#). Several years ago they created [guidelines](#) on how transit agencies can develop a contagious virus response plan that may be of interest to riders.

According to [local media news](#), [BART](#) has stocked up on supplies such as face masks, hand sanitizers, and disinfecting wipes for their employees. As of right now, an extensive plan is still in development. AC Transit has released a [memo](#) on Coronavirus precautions. SFMTA has [said](#) they will continue monitoring the situation.

Other transit agencies have not yet released a coronavirus transit policy. Please be aware of your surroundings while on public transportation and practice proper respiratory etiquette.

SF Bay Area Current Events

Large [tech companies](#), such as Twitter, Amazon, Nike, and Salesforce have taken emergency coronavirus precautions and are restricting their employees from traveling due to the virus. San Francisco Mayor London Breed has declared a state emergency, with some companies having banned [handshakes](#) to prevent the risk of spreading the virus. [SF Chronicle](#) is providing live updates.



Health Guidance for the [Workplace](#)

The following guidelines may help the employers and employees have a better understanding on how to avoid the spread of the virus in a non-healthcare setting. Recommended strategies for employers to use are to:

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home and emphasize staying home when sick:**
 - Employees who have **symptoms** of a respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F)
 - Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
 - Ensure that your **sick leave policies** are **flexible** and **consistent** with public health guidelines and that employees are aware of these policies
- **Separate sick employees**
 - Employees that appear sick upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and sent home immediately
- **Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:**
 - Check the [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each **country** to which you will travel.

Existing OSHA standards apply to protecting workers. [Click Here](#) for more information from OSHA. Telecommuting should be a viable option for many employers. For more information about telecommuting and working from home during the outbreak, please see below or for a more in-depth analysis, please see these [telecommuting guidelines](#) as presented by Rutgers University.

General Benefits of Telecommuting

[Source Site](#)

- Fewer sick days, less exposure to common illnesses, more time for physical activities
- Little to no commuting to and from work, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving half-time telecommuters upwards of 11 days a year on commuting
- Minimal expenses on commuting costs (such as gas, tolls, transit passes, parking, and car maintenance), food, and professional attire upkeep
- Increased productivity through removal of office distractions and lower stress levels – 86% of employees say they're more productive when they work alone and 82% reported lower stress levels
- Flexible scheduling allows for time to care for children, aging parents, pets, other dependents, and being involved in the local community
- Increased happiness within job as well as personal satisfaction



Getting Your [Household](#) Ready for the Coronavirus Disease

Besides proper personal hygiene, we should also ensure that our household members and community have an action plan on what to do to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Below is guidance provided by CDC on how to prepare your household for COVID-19. Practice these good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions:

- **Practice everyday preventive actions now**
- **Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy**
 - If possible, identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use and plan to clean these rooms as needed
- **Avoid sharing personal household items**
 - Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people or pets in your home
 - Wash everything thoroughly with soap and water after each use
- **Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday**
 - These include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables