

Q: Is there assessment guidance to help me determine if my clients at a day/night shelter facility may be at risk for having COVID-19?

A: Yes, the Tennessee Department of Health has [specific guidance for homeless shelter facilities](#). In addition, the CDC has [provided guidance for homeless shelters and service providers](#) to help them plan for and respond to COVID-19.

Q: Is it possible to separate sick clients from well clients in the same facility?

A: Yes, sick and well clients can be present in the same facility BUT should be separated to the greatest extent possible. A private room and/or bathroom should be provided for sick clients if possible. If possible designate separate areas for sick and well clients in larger shared spaces. In shared sleeping areas (for those who are not experiencing respiratory symptoms), ensure that beds or mats are at least 6 feet apart, request that all clients sleep head-to-toe, and create physical barriers between clients with sheets or curtains. Limit interactions between well and sick clients in facility congregate spaces to the greatest extent possible. Ensure shelter staff or volunteers who interact with sick or potentially sick clients (such as intake staff) have protective equipment (such as gloves and masks) for their safety and to prevent transmission of sickness to well clients. Please refer to the Tennessee Department of Health's [specific guidance for homeless shelter facilities](#) for more information, as well as the interim [guidance for homeless service providers](#) developed by the Seattle-King County Public Health Department.

Q: Does the Tennessee Department of Health have supplies (such as hand sanitizer, personal protective equipment, COVID-19 test kits) available for me to use at my facility?

A: No, the Tennessee Department of Health does not currently have supplies such as hand sanitizer, personal protective equipment, COVID-19 test kits to distribute to shelters or other facilities.

Q: Can the Tennessee Department of Health provide staff to help me assess my clients for COVID-19 either on-site at my shelter or at a local health department building?

A: No, the Tennessee Department of Health does not have staff capacity to help assess shelter clients either on-site or at a local health department building at this time. If you suspect a client has COVID-19 call your local health department immediately.

Q: My shelter relies on volunteers who help to staff the shelter and/or provide food. Given “safer at home” directives can my staff and volunteers still provide services?

A: Yes, staff and volunteer workers who provide services at shelters and other facilities that provide services to the homeless are considered “essential staff” and can continue to volunteer at those facilities. However, staff and volunteers should adhere to any updated procedures in place at those facilities to keep themselves and their clients safe. The Tennessee Department of Health has developed an [information sheet that provides guidance for homeless shelters and facilities](#) to reduce the risk of transmission.

Q: Are there guidelines for safe food preparation at my facility?

A: Yes, the Tennessee Department of Health has developed an [information sheet for food handlers](#) to reduce the risk of transmission. Food has NOT been identified as a likely source of COVID-19. However, it can be spread between employees and customers.

Q: Should I be limiting the number of clients in a dining area to 10 or fewer at a time?

A: Yes, if at all possible, try to limit the number of people in a dining space to 10 or fewer. Staggering meal times or providing to-go meals are options. If limiting the number of clients is not feasible, arrange seating so that persons are a minimum of 6' apart.

Q: We have needs for staff/housing/supplies/transportation or other logistics that cannot be met at the local level. Who do we contact for assistance?

A: Please contact your county's Emergency Operations Center for further assistance.