



## Recommendations for Homeless Shelter Facilities and Links to Resources for Vulnerable Populations in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak

The City of Sioux Falls Health Department has developed this guidance to assist homeless shelter facilities and other vulnerable populations in response to the 2019 novel [coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) outbreak. While the situation is evolving, at this time we believe that people over the age of 60, immune-compromised people, and those with chronic medical conditions may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

### **Local Resources:**

- Dial 211 or Helpline Center website: <https://www.helplinecenter.org/when-disaster-strikes/>
- Department of Health data and information: <https://doh.sd.gov/news/Coronavirus.aspx>
- One Sioux Falls fund: <https://www.siouxfalls.business/one-sioux-falls-fund-launched-to-provide-local-covid-19-relief/>
- South Dakota COVID-19 Information Line: 1-800-997-2880
- What Should I Do If? <https://siouxfalls.org/covid19/flowchart>

### **What you can do to protect staff and clients:**

Educate staff and clients about COVID-19. Make sure they know the potential risks and [basic prevention measures](#), such as:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands, especially your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cough and sneeze into elbow or into a tissue. Throw away the tissue immediately after use and wash hands.
- Consider providing masks to sick people.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of distance between yourself and others when feasible.
- Frequently clean and disinfect high contact surfaces like doorknobs, tables, furniture, shared bathrooms, and countertops.
- Ensure adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitizers, and tissues are readily available.
- Post signs sharing how staff and guests can protect themselves and others at the facility.
- Consider posting signs at entrances and in bathrooms.
  - CDC Education Material: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>

Facilities providing sleeping accommodations should attempt to **increase the distance** between people, where feasible. Offering individual rooms for groups or families is ideal, but not typically available. In shared spaces, a “head-to-toe” sleeping arrangement with a minimum of 6 feet of distance between beds is recommended.

Encourage guests to **report illnesses and exposure** to COVID-19 to staff prior or upon entry to the facility. Reassure clients that they will not be denied or lose a bed if they report [symptoms](#).

**Separate sick clients from those without symptoms.** Facilities with a single room should assign sick clients to one side and clients without symptoms to the opposite side.

Encourage staff and volunteers to remain home if they are sick with cough, sneezing, and/or fever. Inform them about sick leave policies. For more information, visit [South Dakota Department of Labor](https://www.southdakota.gov/department-of-labor) website.

***Additional COVID-19 Resources for Vulnerable Populations:***

- Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Exposures: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

***Homelessness:***

- CDC Interim guidance for homeless service providers to plan and respond to coronavirus disease 2019: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html>
- Guidance document to create a readiness plan for pandemic flu: <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions>. Although this document focuses on influenza, much of the principals apply to Coronavirus.
- National Health Care for the Homeless guidance: Many documents within this list directly advise on controlling the spread of infectious disease within homeless shelters, including local policies and guidance from NYC, LA, and Seattle (King County): <https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/>
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/>

***Mental Illness:***

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)—[guide](#) to answer frequently asked questions regarding the intersection between Coronavirus, or COVID-19, and people affected by mental illness, their caregivers, and loved ones.
- Suicide Prevention: If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, please call the Helpline Center: 1-800-273-8255 anytime, day or night.
- Helpline Center's Text4Hope program provides crisis texting support for all high school students. text icare to 898211.

***Addiction:***

- Yale Program in Addiction Medicine Coronavirus Guidance: Patients Engaged in Substance Use Treatment: <https://medicine.yale.edu/intmed/genmed/addictionmedicine>
- American Society of Addiction Medicine: <https://www.asam.org/advocacy/practice-resources/coronavirus-resources>

***Older Adults and People with Disabilities:***

- Administration for Community Living: <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>

***Domestic Violence:***

- National Network to End Domestic Violence: Resources on the response to COVID-19: [https://nnedv.org/latest\\_update/resources-response-coronavirus-covid-19/](https://nnedv.org/latest_update/resources-response-coronavirus-covid-19/)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)