



July 1, 2020

Additional COVID-19 FAQs Around Health Screenings & Face Coverings

Question: *Are the daily health screening questionnaires required in all County departments and facilities?*

Answer: Yes

Question: *Why do I have to complete a daily health screening questionnaire?*

Answer: The California Department of Public Health has issued guidance for office workspaces to “support a safe, clean environment for employees”. Their guidance calls for employers to “provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment.” The County will continue to follow the State’s COVID-19 safety guidelines, including these new requirements. The County is also requiring all business with offices in our county to comply with these same guidelines.

Question: *My department sent me a link to complete the daily health questionnaire on my mobile device, am I entitled to mobile device stipend?*

Answer: No, you are not entitled to a mobile device stipend if requested solely for the completion of the daily health screening per the [County’s Use Policy for Cellular Telephones and Tablet Devices](#). Completing a daily screening before or when reporting to a County work location is required, however using your phone to do so is a convenience. You also have the option to use your personal computer or answer the questions in person. Please contact your supervisor or department safety rep to arrange a suitable means.

Question: *If I complete my daily health questionnaire from home, is that time compensable?*

Answer: No, pre-shift time spent on health checks is not compensable since it is not a principal activity of your job. The questionnaire should only take seconds to complete.

Question: *Are my responses to the daily health screening questionnaire protected by HIPAA?*

Answer: The County treats this information as confidential and will protect your personal privacy; however, it is not HIPAA protected Personal Health Information (PHI). Our screening results will only be shared with select individuals who have a need to know in

order to ensure employees experiencing COVID related symptoms are not reporting to work and are connected with Public Health for further instruction and clearance to return to work. Screenings that reveal symptoms (one or more Yes answers) will be shared with the Public Health Department. They will be maintained separate from your personnel file. Screenings that reveal no symptoms (all No answers) will be deleted or shredded.

Question: *What happens if I answer “yes” to any of the symptoms in the health screening questionnaire?*

Answer: If you answer yes to any of the COVID symptoms and cannot attribute them to another condition (e.g. coughing because of allergies) please stay home and notify your supervisor. You must also contact Public Health (PH) at 805-781-5500 and inform them you are a County employee experiencing symptoms associated with COVID and need to speak the Communicable Diseases team for further direction. You may only return to work once you have been given clearance by PH.

Employees who call in sick and do not report to work due to COVID related symptoms should still notify PH. They must either complete the questionnaire or call PH and identify that they are a County employee with symptoms. This will facilitate getting cleared to return to work.

Question: *I have a medical condition that prevents me from being able to wear a face covering, what should I do?*

Answer: If you have a medical condition that prevents you from wearing a face covering, please inform your supervisor and provide them with your doctor's note. The doctor's note does not need to provide the diagnosis or even the symptoms, just a confirmation of the need for an exclusion from the cloth mask requirement. This is similar to what employees are required to provide to their employers as part of Americans with Disabilities Act and is not in violation of any of privacy laws.

If your job requires you to have regular contact with others, you will be required to wear a non-restrictive alternative such as a face shield in the same situations that calls for a face covering. The County will supply the shield in those instances. You may not use a face shield in the place of a face covering without a documented medical condition, as a face shield is less effective than a mask in protecting those around you.

Question: *May I wear a face shield instead of a cloth face covering?*

Answer: Cloth face covering provide greater protection than face shields; therefore, a face shield is not an alternative unless you are exempt from wearing a cloth face covering (see Q&A above).

Question: *What if a customer refuses to wear a face covering?*

Answer: Businesses have a right to require masks and to refuse entry or service to an individual who is not wearing a mask. It is akin to banning smoking inside of a store - people have a right to smoke, but a business can restrict that right on its premises for the safety and peace of mind of its employees and other customers. However, enforcing the right to require a face covering may be more challenging. Refusing service to a patron for not wearing a face covering could elevate other safety risks, including violence.

Suggested guidelines (please follow your department's protocols if they differ):

- 1) Ask them if they forgot their mask. Well-intentioned people are still trying to develop good habits.
- 2) Offer a disposable mask if they don't have one.
- 3) If they refuse, ask them if they could possibly do the transaction online.
- 4) Still refuse? Speak with the customer behind plexiglass and/or place additional distance between yourself and the customer.
- 5) If the customer is threatening or belligerent, follow your department's protocol for removing such customers. Feel free to reach out to Risk Management at (805) 781-1346 if you need assistance with a Reception Desk Protocol.

Question: *Are Vulnerable Populations returning to the workplace?*

Answer: Please continue to accommodate high-risk/vulnerable workers. This includes people 65 and older or with a medical condition that make them more susceptible to infection or at risk of serious health risks if they are infected. While they may return to the workplace, we would prefer that they continue to shelter in place in order to protect themselves. Some departments are also seeking to protect them by altering their role or work setting. Please work with your HR Analyst to discuss accommodation questions or concerns.

Question: *If an employee is vulnerable due to a medical condition, will they be required to provide evidence of their medical condition to seek an alternative to reporting to their workplace?*

Answer: Yes