



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

COVID-19 GUIDE TO INTERACTING WITH VISITORS AND CLIENTS

As County offices gradually resume in-person operations, interacting with visitors and clients will need to be conducted within the framework of social distancing. Providing services may be perceived as burdensome because of new procedures, but maximizing employee, visitor, and client safety while reducing the transmission of COVID-19 is the purpose of these guidelines.

These guidelines are intended for general office environments. The operations of each department are unique, and each department may have more restrictive or specific rules or procedures suited to their operations. If departments have questions about their specific procedures, they should consult with County Risk Management.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Practice respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette to prevent the spread of viruses, including:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is also an option when soap and water are not readily available.
- Wear a County issued or personal [Face Covering](#) at all times when in the workplace.

FACE TO FACE PUBLIC INTERACTIONS

Requirements under social distancing may change the way visitors are greeted and how they receive services. Reception areas, transaction counters, and public service areas may need to be altered to promote social distancing. Where possible, use the following guidelines:

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet apart.
- Conduct interactions behind a counter or table to help maintain social distances.
- Advise visitors of any changes to services and what to expect with such changes.
- Offer online options and provide instructional handouts, if available.
- Disinfect surfaces and any touched equipment after each interaction.
- If you handle shared materials, wash your hands with soap and water afterward.

FIELD INTERACTIONS

Many County operations involve field work outside of the office environment which may or may not involve public interaction. The above guidelines for face to face interactions should cover most instances. In some cases, operational changes may need to be made to reduce the volume and duration of public interactions.

WHAT TO DO WHEN VISITORS AND CLIENTS DO NOT COMPLY

Most individuals understand the importance of maintaining social distancing and wearing face coverings, but there may be some who do not follow COVID-19 protocols. In such cases, remember that there may be an underlying reason for their actions and that they may be exempt.

Our goal is to reaffirm how practicing safe social-distancing measures and wearing face coverings help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Educational materials for social distancing and face coverings are available, such as:

County of San Mateo [COVID-19 Face Coverings](#)

County of San Mateo, Public Health [Social Distancing During Coronavirus](#)

CDC [Important Information About Your Cloth Face Coverings](#)

When an employee provides *direct services* to a visitor or client who is not wearing a face covering, they should:

1. Ask if the visitor or client has a face covering to wear. If available, provide an unused face covering for their use. If the individual puts on a face covering, resume the service interaction.
2. If the visitor or client continues to not wear a face covering, you should provide information about how services can be obtained remotely.
 - If services are urgent and cannot be provided remotely, consult with a manager or supervisor about safe options for providing direct services that include observation of social distancing measures.
 - If a manager determines services are urgent, cannot be provided remotely, and cannot be provided on-site in observation of social distancing, the manager should decide if the visitor or client should be directed to leave. Managers should take into consideration whether the visitor or client is exempt from the [Face Covering Order](#) and the relative urgency of the service needed when making such a determination.
 - Note: If a manager asks the visitor or client if they are exempt from the [Face Covering Order](#), they should show the visitor the reasons listed in the order for exemptions and should not pry into the specific reason the visitor or client believes they are exempt.
3. **If any interaction escalates to a point where the visitor becomes confrontational and refuses to leave, *after being asked to leave by management*, call 9-911.**
 - Departments may have specific internal security procedures that should be followed when dealing with confrontational individuals. Ask a supervisor or manager about any questions or concerns on workplace security.
 - The Sheriff's Office, Countywide Security Unit, can provide additional guidance and training on dealing with uncooperative people.