**Key Questions and Answers for Site Staff from BPHC re: COVID-19**

Last Revised March 15, 2020

1. Can BPHC notify BHA of anyone testing positive or being told to quarantine by health providers?

State law protects patients’ health information, including COVID19 test results. To prevent the spread of COVID19, we strongly encourage all congregate settings, including housing developments, to follow the Boston Public Health Commission’s cleaning guidelines found [here](https://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/infectious-diseases/Infectious-Diseases-A-to-Z/Documents/Cleaning%20and%20Disinfecting%20for%20COVID%2019.pdf). The Center for Disease Control has additional cleaning [guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) that is helpful.

1. We have many shared hallways -- railings, doorknobs, doors, elevator buttons etc that are high-touch.  Other than frequent cleanings, what precautions need to be taken in an entry/hallway when someone is quarantining in a unit?

Continue to the clean frequently hallways cleaning and use protective gear, such as surgical masks and gloves; Open windows for ventilation,n if possible.

Additionally, we recommend for all shared spaces having supplies available to facilitate behaviors that limit the spread of infection, including hand sanitizer and Kleenex and posters reminding residents of steps to prevent infection. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on cleaning and on trash removal.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html> This CDC link is specific to situations with a confirmed COVID-19 case that houses people overnight and have staff.

1. Has BPHC developed any signage for hallways and elevators in multi-family buildings?

Yes. We encourage you to post the ‘easy steps to help prevent the spread of infections’ posters in 4 languages which we have provided. We can discuss, with you, what other messages are necessary.

1. If there are emergency issues with a unit (ie plumbing etc.) what are best protective measures for staff having to enter the unit?

Use protective gear, such as surgical masks and gloves, keeping as much of a distance from people as you can and limiting the amount of time that you need to be in a situation where you are in close contact with effected person. Have the person in the room that has been used for their separation.

Wash your hands before putting on PPE (mask and gloves) and entering the unit. Take PPE off upon exiting the unit, bag in the trash, and wash your hands.  Don't wear the PPE you wore in the quarantined person's unit out into the hall or through the common areas.  Use hand sanitizer if you can't wash your hands right away.

Depending on what you are working on (something that's high-touch by the quarantined person vs. something they have no access to) you may want to wipe surfaces down with a disinfectant wipe prior to starting work.

1. We have large families in relatively small units.  For the most part the protocol will be for the sick person to isolate in one bedroom.  Sometimes there may be elders or others at risk in the unit.  We do not have the ability to provide additional units.  What are the thresholds for removing a sick person from a unit to one of the City's homeless COVID-19 facilities?  We need to minimize this as much as possible.

The situation of BHA and your residents is very much on our radar. The Boston Public Health Commission currently does not have units to isolate Boston residents diagnosed with COVID 19 and are urging residents to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance to isolate at home, while understanding that there are situations make that guidance particularly challenging.

We are working with community partners on alternative spaces particularly for Boston’s residents who are unable to follow this guidance due to homelessness and unstable housing. In the event that facilities or units are identified, we will work with you and others on a system of prioritizing based on factors including vulnerability and risk.

1. What else do building managers need to know from a maintenance/management perspective (not asking for health protocols, asking for building protocols).

Keep up to date with and follow the CDC guidance on COVID 19 [guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) . Make sure that staff are trained on how to use cleaners. Use cleaners in a well ventilated area. ​Make sure safety data sheets for all cleaning products are on file and all staff fully trained in proper use, not to mix chemicals, etc. to prevent injuries and also to prevent ineffective use of products (surface disinfectants shouldn't be used as 'foggers', etc). In addition to door handles and elevator buttons, building mail rooms or mailboxes are high-touch areas for special cleaning attention.

Create ways to communicate with tenants remotely, via text, phone radio or perhaps documents under the door.