

# County of Santa Clara

## Public Health Department

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### NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY BUSINESSES

#### February 10, 2020

Dear Business Partner:

I am writing to provide an update regarding the novel coronavirus in our county, and to share updated guidance for employees who have recently traveled to China.

The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department received laboratory confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of two unrelated cases of novel coronavirus, one on Friday January 31, and the second on Sunday February 2. Both cases had traveled to Wuhan, China within the 14 days before they became ill. Both cases have stayed home (self-isolating). We have reached out to those who may have been in close contact with either case to determine whether they were exposed to the novel coronavirus. All exposed close contacts have been instructed to stay home (quarantine) and monitored for symptoms.

To date, we do not have any evidence to suggest that the novel coronavirus is circulating in Santa Clara County or the Bay Area, and public health departments are working hard to keep it that way. As we have all been communicating, the situation is evolving rapidly, and we anticipate this pace of change to continue.

We are all learning more every day about how this virus behaves. From what we know, most spread of infection has occurred among close contacts. A close contact is someone who has spent time face-to-face with a confirmed case for an extended period, such as days or hours. The extent to which a person who is infected but does not have symptoms might spread the virus to others (“asymptomatic transmission”) is not known.

Partially in response to this uncertainty, on February 2 the federal government implemented the following policy:

- Formally quarantine all travelers returning to the U.S. from the Hubei Province, China.
- Travelers returning from mainland China, not Hubei Province, are being screened for symptoms upon arrival. If they do not have symptoms, they may return home with a recommendation to self-quarantine for 14 days from their last day in mainland China.

Public health officials will be in communications with these returning travelers.

For businesses with employees who have returned from mainland China on or **before February 2**, we are asking employers to do the following:

1. If returning employees have been in Hubei province within the last 14 days, please ask them to return home. They should call the Public Health Department during regular business hours (408-885-3980, M-F 8-5) so that we can provide specific guidance on monitoring themselves for symptoms for 14 days since their last day in China.

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Ken Yeager, S. Joseph Simitian  
County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

2. Family members of travelers who visited Hubei province or mainland China within the last 14 days and are not ill, do not need to quarantine at home. They should monitor for symptoms and avoid attending large gatherings.
3. Employees who have been to other areas of mainland China (this excludes Hong Kong) within the last 14 days and came back to the U.S. on or before February 2 may wish to consider staying home for 14 days after they left mainland China, but it is not mandatory. They should continue monitoring themselves for symptoms until the end of the 14 days since they left China.

**Please do not require a physician's clearance to return to work for employees who have returned from traveling and are not sick.** We are receiving communications that this is happening, which is impacting the medical system and preventing doctors from seeing patients who are ill.

If any employees become symptomatic within 14 days since their last day in China with fever (including chills or night sweats), cough, or shortness of breath, they should go home, call a healthcare provider and let the provider know their travel history and symptoms.

We encourage everyone to take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases, including common illnesses like colds and flu:

- Encourage all employees to stay home when they are sick.
- Those who have a fever at work should go home immediately and stay there for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Separate sick employees from others in a separate place until they can go home.
- Promote hand hygiene through education and availability of soap, hand sanitizers, and tissues.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Encourage proper cough etiquette—cough or sneeze into a tissue, sleeve, or arm. Do not use your hands.
- Perform routine surface cleaning, particularly for high-touch surfaces.
- Consider not attending or hosting large gatherings. This is where cold, flu, and other respiratory viruses are often spread.

The Public Health Department has a webpage dedicated to novel coronavirus in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese at [www.sccphd.org/coronavirus](http://www.sccphd.org/coronavirus) . We will keep the webpage updated as much as possible. We will monitor the developing situation and inform you of any additional public health recommendations.

We deeply appreciate your partnership in communicating this information to employees. We also greatly appreciate everyone's efforts in staying informed, calm, and thoughtful as we all do our part to help keep our communities safe.

All the best,



Sara H. Cody, MD, Health Officer and Director  
County of Santa Clara Public Health Department