



Tip Sheet for Operating Indoors: Personal Services

UPDATED October 27, 2020

The following Tip Sheet was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) based on recommendations and guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State of California, and Personal Service Providers licensing and industry groups. This guidance is posted at <https://www.sfdcp.org>.

AUDIENCE: **Indoor Personal service providers**, including hair salons, barber shops, nail salons, body art practitioners, electrology services, massage (in a non-healthcare setting), tanning salons, estheticians, skin care, and cosmetology services.

BACKGROUND: On October 27, 2020, the Health Officer issued [Directive No. 2020-30b](#) authorizing and providing guidance for Personal Services and amended [Appendix C-1 Additional Businesses Permitted to Operate](#). This document summarizes the main action items from the Directive. All personal service providers must adhere to all state and local regulations.

Primary changes from previous versions:

- This updated TIP Sheet includes best practices for personal service providers who offer services that require the removal of the client's face covering, e.g., facials, hair removal, or beard trims.
- Most indoor personal services may be provided with modifications except body art services for the mouth and nose area. In accordance with the state, body art services around the mouth and nose area are not allowed at this time. All clients must wear their face coverings through the entire service unless otherwise noted.
- Requires providers to wear eye protection and an N95 respirator (commonly known as an N95 mask) while providing services that require the client to remove their face covering.
- Strongly recommends providers to wear eye protection and an N95 respirator when providing services that require the provider and client to be within three feet of each other for more than 15 minutes or when providing services that occur around the head and neck.
- Eye protection and other [PPE can be obtained for free](#) from the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development.
- Please follow these Tips to keep you, your clients and your Personnel safer.

Indoor Activities Increase COVID-19 Risk

Scientists agree that the risk of transmitting COVID-19 is generally higher indoors than outdoors. Consider the increased risk to yourself and your community before participating in indoor activities.

The COVID-19 virus can travel in the air more than 6 feet and builds up indoors. Generally, whenever possible, choose outdoor activities over indoor activities, and if you need to go indoors, limit your time indoors if you are with people who are not in your household. Avoid enclosed spaces that are crowded and have poor ventilation.



How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These droplets enter the air when a person exhales (breathes out), including when they talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms at all and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets.

- Larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Smaller droplets or infectious particles can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.

COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite), however this is less common.

Basic Covid-19 prevention

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70 % isopropanol.
- **Avoid Close Contact.** To the greatest extent, maintain at least six feet of social distancing between yourself and the people who don’t live in your Household.
- **Wear a Face Covering.** Cover your mouth and nose with a Face Covering in public settings and when around people who don’t live in your Household.
- Routinely **clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.**

Monitor Your Health Daily. Be alert of symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay home.

Flu vaccines

Flu vaccines are critical in the fight against COVID-19 by (1) keeping workers and communities healthy and (2) reducing strain on our healthcare and testing systems that are responding to COVID-19. **Those over the age of 6 months are strongly encouraged to get a flu shot.** Find out how to get one at www.sfcdcp.org/flu

Plan and Prepare your space

Review the Tip Sheet for Safer Interactions During COVID-19 Pandemic at www.sfcdcp.org/safersocial

Capacity

- Calculate your capacity limits using FEMA’s [Understanding the impact of social distancing on occupancy](#). It is approximately 1 person per 113 -150 square feet to maintain social distancing.
- Redesign layout to allow for proper social distancing. Space workstations at least six feet apart.



The Role of Ventilation

Good ventilation controls droplets and infectious particles to prevent COVID-19 transmission by:

- removing air containing droplets and particles from the room,
- diluting the concentration of droplets and particles by adding fresh, uncontaminated air,
- filtering room air, removing droplets and particles from the air.

Make Necessary Ventilation Improvements, If Feasible, Including

- HVAC systems (if one is present)
 - Ensure HVAC systems are serviced and functioning properly.
 - Evaluate possibilities for upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible.
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, readjusting or overriding recirculation (“economizer”) dampers.
 - Disable “demand controls” on ventilation systems so that fans operate continuously, independently of heating or cooling needs.
 - Evaluate running the building ventilation system even when the building is unoccupied to maximize ventilation. At the minimum, reset timer-operated ventilation systems so that they start operating 1-2 hours before the building opens and 2-3 hours after the building is closed.
- Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
- Consider installing portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
- If the establishment uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the direction of fans to minimize air blowing from one individual’s space to another’s space.

For more information and additional resources, please see the [SFDPH Ventilation Guidance](#)

New Signage Requirement for Providers Offering Services that Require Removal of Face Covering

Beginning November 3, 2020, Personal Service Providers that offer services to customers that require the customer to remove their Face Covering must conspicuously post signage, including at all primary public entrances, indicating which of the following ventilation systems are used at the facility.

The County is making templates for the signage available online at <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>. The templates may be updated from time to time, as we learn more about COVID-19 and transmission. Businesses are strongly urged to keep informed of those changes and update their signage accordingly.

Plumbing

If your business or workplace has been vacant during the Shelter In Place ordinance, check that your plumbing is working properly and flush stagnant water from the pipes. [See the PUC guidance here.](#)



Supplies

- Provide approved disinfectants for uses against COVID-19. The approved products are listed [on the Environmental Protection Agency's website](#).
- Provide handwashing/hand sanitizing stations for both Personnel and clients.
- Provide a non-porous chair or plastic basket or paper bag for client's clothing or belongings.
- Provide proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for all Personnel. Eye protection and/or gloves may be required when performing specific services. See the Cal/OSHA guidance on [Expanded Personal Care Services](#).
- Personnel must wear a face covering at all times.
- Personnel providing services that require the clients to remove their face covering, must be supplied eye protection (goggles or face shield) and an N95 respirator (commonly referred to as an N95 mask). See resources for information on obtaining free PPE.
- If you don't already have a touchless payment system, consider installing one.

Cleaning and Sanitation

- Follow all sanitation requirements. All equipment must be properly disinfected between clients. This includes but is not limited to, chairs, tables, combs, brushes, scissors, etc. Review the directive for specific COVID-19 sanitation requirements.
- All linens must be washed between clients; even if your client does not get under them.
- Personnel handling soiled linens should wear gloves and follow proper glove removal and hand washing protocols.
- Wash your hands frequently and between clients.
- If feasible, Personal Service Providers should consider changing their own clothes after each client or wearing scrubs or a clean, launderable or disposable smock.

Mandatory Signage Requirements

Add all COVID-19 related signage as required by [Sections 4.g and 4.h of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order](#). Complete signage requirements are described in [Directive 20-30b](#).

The [Outreach Toolkit](#) includes printable resources including many of the signs required or suggested to open Personal Services. Signs about proper hygiene, social distancing, Face Coverings, health screening, the risks of indoor transmission, testing and getting vaccinated for the flu are all available.

Protect Personnel and Clients

Conduct wellness checks for everyone (Personnel and clients) before they enter the building. [Instructions for screening clients](#) is attached to the Directive. Screening instructions for Personnel are similar, and may be found at <https://www.sfcddp.org/screening-handout>

- Encourage your clients to conduct a self-screening before they arrive for their appointment.

Scheduling

- In accordance with the State of California guidance, Hair Salons and Barbershops may see clients



by appointment only. Walk-ins are not permitted at this time. Other Personal Services providers are also strongly encouraged to see clients by appointment only.

- Schedule your clients to allow enough time between appointments so workspaces and tools can be properly cleaned and disinfected. Consider servicing fewer clients each day or expanding operating hours to allow for more time for sanitation between clients.
- Consider pausing strict cancellation policies to encourage sick clients to stay home. Clients must be allowed to reschedule due to symptoms of COVID-19 without charge.
- Remind clients not to arrive too early for an appointment. Clients may need to wait outside depending on the capacity of the space.

Contact Tracing

- The San Francisco Department of Public Health, in partnership with community, including businesses helps identify those who have had close contact with anyone who has COVID-19. People can transmit the virus 48 hours before they develop symptoms. Some people never develop symptoms and can still transmit the virus. **We can help prevent COVID-19 transmission by contact tracing which helps identify people who may have been exposed and helping them quarantine so they do not inadvertently spread the disease.** We do this whenever there is an outbreak of infectious diseases like measles, tuberculosis, and others to protect the community's health.
- Help ensure the health of your Personnel, clients, and our community. Retain the attendance/schedules of all Personnel at your organization for up to three weeks. It is recommended that organizations maintain a list of clients willing to voluntarily provide their name and contact information [or consent to retain their credit card information] for contact tracing purposes. Any lists should be discarded after three weeks. Patrons are not required to provide contact information.
- If Personnel or a client tests positive for COVID-19, the organization must assist the Department of Public Health in identifying other Personnel or clients who may have been exposed.
- **Cover your face, test early, and trace!** Find out more at <https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing>

Special considerations for Specific Service Types

[Cal/OSHA provides additional requirements and guidance](#) for Personal Services providers and includes the tips listed below.

Barber services

- When providing services that require the client to remove their face covering, providers **must** wear eye protection such as a face shield or goggles and an N95 respirator (mask) without a valve.
- It is strongly recommended that providers wear eye protection when providing services to head and neck area and/or if the provider is within three feet of the client for more than 15 minutes.
- Ask your client to limit conversation while they are unmasked. Not speaking is safer.
- Provide your client with a tissue or towel in case they need to cough or sneeze while their face covering is removed.



Esthetic, Skin Care and Cosmetology

- When providing services that require the client to remove their face covering, providers **must** wear eye protection such as a face shield or goggles **and** an N95 respirator.
- It is strongly recommended that providers wear eye protection when providing services to head and neck area and if the provider is within three feet of the client for more than 15 minutes.
- Limit conversation while your client is unmasked. Not speaking is safer.
- Provide your client with a tissue or towel in case they need to cough or sneeze while their face covering is removed. Have the client dispose dirty tissues or towels in a lidded container.
- Disposable gloves should be worn throughout the entire esthetic service, and while performing cleaning and disinfection of all implements and surfaces after each client session.
- Single use applicators should be disposed of immediately in a lidded container lined with a plastic bag.

Electrology

- Electrologist must wear disposable gloves.
- When providing services that require the client to remove their face covering, providers **must** wear eye protection such as a face shield or goggles AND an N95 mask.
- It is strongly recommended that providers wear eye protection when providing services to head and neck area and/or if the provider is within three feet of the client for more than 15 minutes.
- Tweezers, rollers, and needle holder caps should be properly cleaned and sterilized between each client.
- Needles used for electrolysis must be single-use, disposable, prepackaged, and sterile and disposed of in an approved sharps container immediately after use.

Massage Therapists (in non-healthcare settings)

- Ask the client to clean their hands with hand sanitizer or by washing their hands with soap and water prior to service.
- The massage therapist and client must wear a face covering at all times.
- Facial massages are not permitted (per the state) if it requires your client to remove their face covering.
- Barriers such as washable sheets and pillowcases are not a substitution for cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Massage tables and chairs must be properly disinfected between clients.
- Hand treatments should be provided as the last part of the massage and hands should be washed immediately upon finishing the massage.
- You may do outcalls if you have an [Outcall Massage Permit](#).

Nail Services

- Ask client to clean hands with hand sanitizer prior to service.
- Portable tubs/bowls must be disinfected with an EPA-registered liquid disinfectant that is labeled as a bactericide, fungicide and virucide. All water must be disposed of properly inside.



Do not use the storm drain to dump any wastewater or other debris.

- Use disposable tools as much as you can. All disposable items should be thrown away in lined and lidded trash can.
- Do not allow clients to get multiple services at the same time, such as a manicure and pedicure.
- All providers must always wear a face covering or a respirator when required. Please see the Cal/OSHA guidance on [Expanded Personal Care Services](#).
- All nail providers must wear disposable gloves during the service and while cleaning and disinfecting all tools and surfaces after each client.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is it safe for me to get a massage/haircut/facial/etc?

A. All activities that bring you within six feet of individuals outside of your household, particularly those indoors or for a sustained period of time (more than 15 minutes), carry risk. You can decrease that risk by being vigilant in your personal hygiene and going to a service provider who also takes health and safety precautions seriously.

- Wear a face covering as required. Use a face covering with ear-loops to keep your mask from interfering with your services.
- You must cancel/reschedule an appointment if they have COVID-19 symptoms. The Health Directive prohibits your Personal Service Provider from charging an extra fee if you have to reschedule due to COVID-19 symptoms.
- Consider limiting the amount of time spent at personal care service appointments to decrease your exposure and the exposure of those around you.

Q. I bring my own tools/polish to my appointments; can I do that?

A. Not at this time and it is strongly advised to minimize the number of items you bring inside to your appointment. Keep to essentials only (wallet, keys, small purse).

Q. Are N95 masks required?

A. N95 masks are not required for clients. N95s and eye protection are now required for Personnel who provide allowable services that require a client to remove their face covering. Additionally, continue to follow your industry regulations and use an N95 mask or respirator when required. If you use an N95 mask or respirator with a valve, you must cover the valve with a face covering.

Q. Are gloves required?

A. Esthetic, skin care, cosmetology and nail services are required to wear gloves throughout the service and while cleaning and disinfecting tools. If possible, have latex-free gloves on hand for both clients and staff with latex allergies. Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand washing.

Q. Am I allowed to operate both indoor and outdoor personal services?

A. Yes. Operating outdoors is highly encouraged.

Q. I am a practitioner who offers Reiki, Cupping, or Rolfing. Where do I fit in?

A. This is the correct guidance to follow. You should also review the [Directive on Ambulatory Care](#).

Q. I am a body art practitioner; may I continue to offer my full menu of services?

A. Current state guidance does not allow piercing of the nose or mouth or any service that requires



the client to remove their face covering.

Q. I provide personal care services out of my home; can I start doing that again? Or - I provide personal care services in clients' homes, can I start doing that again?

A. Yes, if you were able to do this pre-COVID-19, you may start operating your business again. You must adhere to the current directive and guidance.

Q. Can I provide a service where the client need remove their mask?

A. Yes. Facials, face waxing, beard trims, etc. are allowed with modifications. Providers must wear eye protection and an N95 mask while providing these services. Body Art and Massage Practitioners may not perform services that require a client to remove their face coverings.

Q. Should we vacuum or sweep hair?

A. Vacuuming with a HEPA filter is recommended over sweeping. If you do not have a vacuum with a HEPA filter, consider carefully sweeping during a period when the fewest people are occupying the space. Consider waiting to sweep/vacuum as part of the disinfection protocols between clients. Wear a face covering and sweep gently to minimize movement and spread of particles.

Q. I'm a Business Owner. How do I make sure Personnel are not sick when they work?

A. Please see SFDPH guidance on [Asking COVID-19 Screening Questions](#), posted at www.sfcddcp.org/screen.

Q. What if a service provider or client tests positive for COVID-19?

A. People may be able to transmit the virus 48 hours before they develop symptoms of COVID-19. They may also transmit the virus even if they never develop symptoms.

Please see SFDPH guidance [What to do if Someone at the Workplace Has COVID-19](#).

Providers should keep a list of Personnel and Clients, which will help SFDPH with contact tracing.

Resources

You can find printable resources such as signage in the [COVID-19 toolkit](#).

Cal/OSHA guidance:

- [Indoor Personal Services Guidance](#) and [Personal Services checklist](#)
- [Indoor Hair Salons and Barber shops Guidance](#) and [checklist](#)

Free eye protection and other PPE:

- <https://oewd.org/free-ppe-available>