

Prepare for Isolation in Homeless and Congregate Settings

Determine your facility's policies for [Quarantine and Isolation](#).

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should isolate. People who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms but have not been tested or are awaiting test results should also isolate but remain separate from those who tested positive.

Contact your Local Public Health (LPH) agency to determine current isolation procedures.

Service providers should be aware of isolation spaces and essential services available in their area. This should include knowing the eligibility criteria, intake procedure, transportation, and discharge for any existing isolation spaces. Be aware that isolation spaces available last fall and winter may be closed or operating at a lower capacity.

Assess your facility's ability to support onsite isolation.

Facilities can adapt their existing facilities to support isolation.

- Designate separate sleeping areas, bathrooms, entrances, smoking areas, and other spaces for people in isolation. Avoid mixing people in isolation with other populations.
- Deliver meals and other necessities (e.g., medications) to people in isolation. This minimizes their movement around the facility.
- Assign fully vaccinated staff to work in isolation spaces. These staff should not be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Staff should use [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
 - The State of Minnesota Emergency-Staffing pool will cease operating as of August 31, 2021.
- Identify COVID-19 testing locations or sources (e.g., local public health, community testing).
- Stock up on PPE, thermometers, pulse oximeters, first aid and medical supplies, food, hygiene supplies, and other essentials.

In preparing for on-site isolation, consider the specific needs and preferences of your population. Try to offer amenities (e.g., preferred foods, entertainment, pets, harm reduction supplies) to make people comfortable remaining in their designated isolation area for as long as medically recommended.

Identify alternate isolation options if necessary

If your area does not have a dedicated isolation facility and you are unable to offer onsite isolation, we recommend coordinating with other shelters in your area. With this option, a shelter could convert some or all its facility into an isolation site while the other shelters continue their regular operations. Pursuing this option will likely require transportation and shared staffing.

If you are concerned about how to respond to COVID-19 cases in your facility, or you don't think any of these options will work for you, please email MDH (Health.R-Congregate@state.mn.us).