

Shelter Best Practices: Prevention of Communicable Disease

This guidance is provided by the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE.) Denver's local health department with the goal of helping shelters to minimize the transmission of communicable disease and optimize health of those served. DDPHE strongly recommends written procedures for the following be provided and be practiced:

- ***Policy for cleaning, sanitization and disinfection of environmental surfaces***

- Establish the frequency of cleaning and disinfection schedules
- Identify who is responsible
- Develop a log used to verify cleaning times and schedules
- Sanitize most commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, faucets, light switches, railings, counters, etc. every hour during high traffic
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the restroom, including toilets, stall and door handles, and restroom fixtures.
- List of products used for cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection. Provide procedure for mixing and use.
- Detailed plan to address exposures to communicable diseases within the shelter such as Hepatitis A, norovirus, TB, HIV, etc. (City would recommend stronger agent for disinfection if there is a known exposure.)
- Procedure for sanitizing mattresses/sleeping surfaces daily
- Clean-up procedures for fecal or vomit event

- ***Illness policy for those served, staff and volunteers***

- Watch for individuals experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice (yellow eyes or skin)
- Report illness in any individuals immediately to local health department
- Restrict ill individuals from preparing, serving and handling any food or food equipment
- Equip ill individuals with masks, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Provide recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for individuals that care for ill persons
- Provide training on bloodborne pathogens with staff who care for ill persons or clean-up possible body fluids
- Provide isolated sleeping quarters for ill individuals when possible

- ***Policy for providing information about basic hygienic practices of those served, staff and volunteers***

- Post information in common areas and restrooms about importance of hand washing after using restroom, before eating, before touching mouth
- Use of hand sanitizer throughout shelter
- Post information and educate those served about any increase in illness among the population or specific exposures they may have had at the shelter

- ***Policy for pest management***

- Document the policy for who is responsible for checking for pests, frequency, logs, thresholds for action

- ***Policy for ensuring safe food handling practices***

- Upper management requests DDPHE notification of all inspection reports and reviews/addresses any deficiencies promptly. Areas of noncompliance are not left solely to the people working in the shelters.
- Restrict ill individuals from food handling. Individuals shall not handle food if they are experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or jaundice.
- How are sanitation and food temperatures addressed on a daily basis in the kitchen and other food service areas? These are the biggest risk factors for foodborne illness.