



Interim Guidance on Mail Handling

Purpose

This guidance is designed to give you information about mail handling and preventing the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). It is based on the best information currently available and will be updated when appropriate. Please visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus for updates.

Mail Handling

Much is still being discovered about the virus that causes COVID-19 and how it spreads. This guidance is based on scientific knowledge gained to date, and what is known about similar coronaviruses.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. It may be possible for people to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Even though the virus can survive for a short period on many surfaces, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that it is unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) recommends that individuals follow everyday actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus, including COVID-19. This includes washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after collecting mail from a post office or home mailbox.

Information will be provided on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/) as it becomes available.

COVID-19 Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take steps to avoid exposure to this virus. DSHS recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus, including COVID-19:

- Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
 - If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, including while opening mail
- Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

DSHS also recommends that you use simple cloth face coverings in public and practice social distancing to help slow the spread of the virus. Social distancing involves staying away from other people to avoid catching or spreading illness. This means avoiding large gatherings including work or school settings, remaining in the home except for essential needs such as groceries, skipping the handshake, and staying at least six feet away from others when in public.

Further information about COVID-19 can be found on the DSHS website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus.

Resources for Businesses and Employees Handling Mail

Business owners, employers, and members of the general public can find workplace-specific recommendations on the DSHS COVID-19 website at: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/business.aspx>

Businesses and employers can find interim guidance for the COVID-19 response on the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

Information about the United States Postal Service's (USPS) COVID-19 response can be found on their website at: <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/statements/usps-statement-on-coronavirus.htm>

Information for mail and parcel delivery workers about COVID-19 can be found on the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/mail-parcel-drivers.html>