

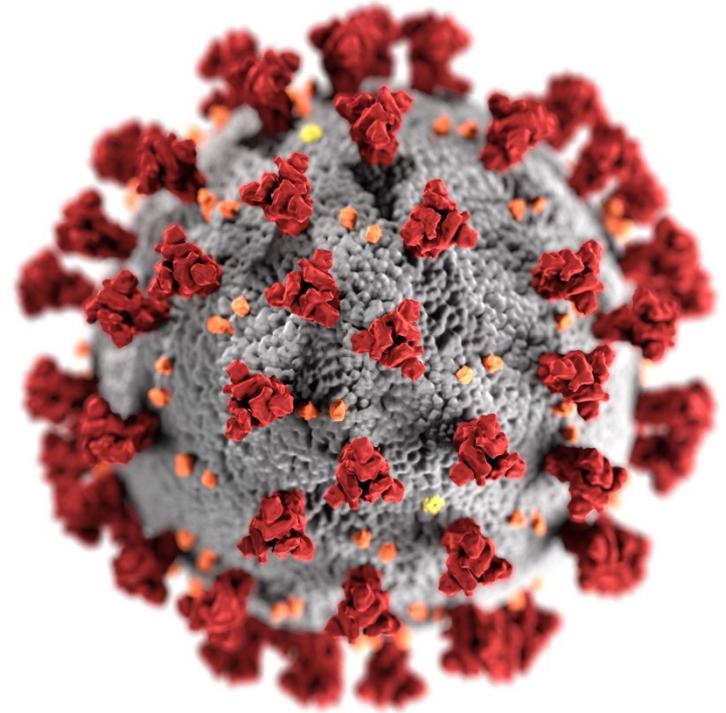
# Considerations for Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

# Hurricane season 2020

- Hurricane season is expected to be more active than average this year.
- In spite of stay-at-home orders, it may become necessary for people to seek safety in evacuation shelters.
- Shared living areas and crowded conditions in shelters require modifications to standard shelter operations.
- CDC developed recommendations to assist shelter staff to reduce the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 among shelter staff, volunteers, shelter residents, and visitors.

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# Sheltering during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Questions

- How do we lower the risk of transmission?
- How do we operate while maintaining social distancing?
- What strategies can we use to monitor illness?
- What do we do if someone gets sick?
- What should people bring to a shelter?
- What are considerations for people in the higher risk category?
- What are considerations for children?
- What if someone brings their pet?

# First consideration

# Disaster shelter options During Covid-19



# Disaster shelter options

## Option 1 - Hotels or dormitories

Preferred option:

- Separate rooms lower risk of transmission
- Areas for feeding, laundry, and other services
- Hotels preferred over dormitories because they have private bathrooms, televisions, phones, and bedding



# Disaster shelter options

## Option 2 - Campgrounds

- People can stay in separate tents, cabins, or RVs
- Many sites have bathrooms, laundry and bathing facilities
- Need to check for accessibility
- Post-hurricane sheltering only



# Disaster shelter options

## Option 3 - Congregate shelters

- Small shelter (fewer than 50 residents)
  - May need more shelters
  - Less complicated operations
  - May be closer to home than larger facility
- Large shelters
  - Option of last resort
  - Demobilize when safe to do so
  - Move shelter residents out of large shelters as soon as possible



# CDC Interim Guidance for General Population Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic



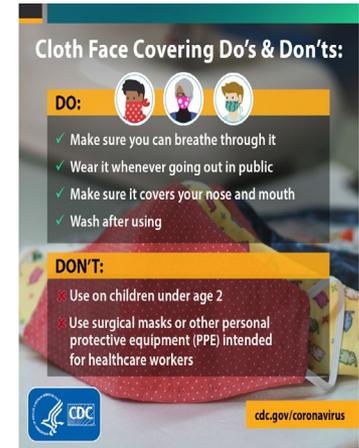
# CDC Interim Guidance for General Population Disaster Shelters During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The guidance covers the following topics:

- People who need to take extra precautions
- Screening, monitoring, and isolation
- Intake area and waiting room
- Isolation area
- Discontinuation of isolation
- Information in all common areas of the shelter
- Social distancing
- Food service
- Increased use of supplies
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Air filtration
- Special considerations for children
- Animals in emergency shelters

# Key points and important messages

- Alternatives to opening disaster shelters, such as sheltering in-place, should be considered if safe.
- Everyone in the shelter should wear a [cloth face covering](#) at all times except when not practical, such as when eating or showering. \*
- Access to safe shelter is critical and shelters should not exclude people who are having symptoms or test positive for COVID-19. These individuals should be directed to the isolation area.



\* Cloth face coverings should not be placed on babies or children younger than 2 years of age or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.

# Key points and important messages

- Staff should monitor residents for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and other illness, including mental/behavioral health concerns, and provide a daily update to the local health department.
- Shelters should provide separate areas to isolate residents with symptoms of COVID-19.
- If testing is available, shelter staff, volunteers, and residents should be tested in accordance with state and local health department guidelines.



# Key points and important messages

- Use of cloth face coverings, frequent handwashing, social distancing, and frequent cleaning and disinfection should be maintained in all areas of the shelter, including animal area.
- In accordance with the ADA, service animals must be allowed to stay with their handlers unless the animal is out of control or poses a direct threat to health and safety.



# CHALLENGES

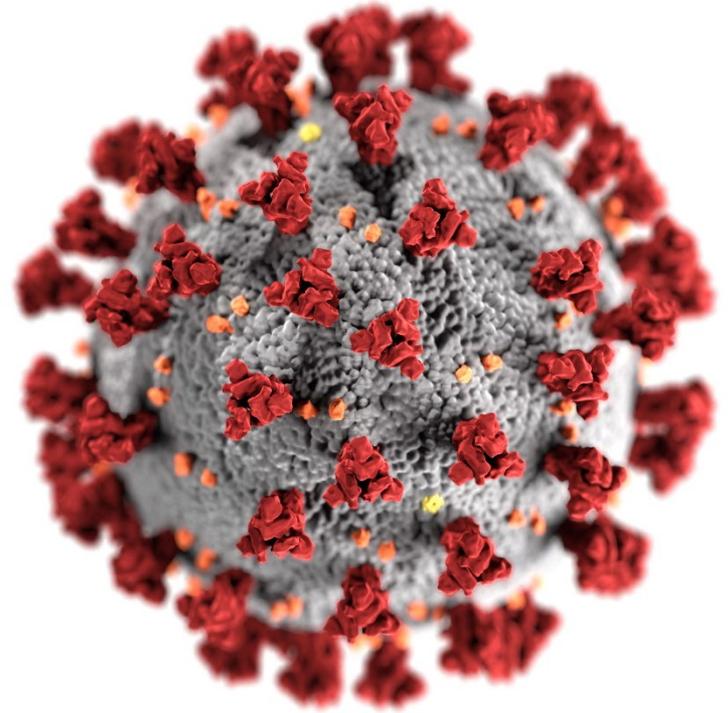


# Not a perfect solution

## Challenges:

- Some people may be afraid to go to a shelter due to COVID-19.
- There may not be enough masks, face coverings, or testing available for everyone.
- People may not comply with social distancing and other preventive measures.
- May be a heightened level of anxiety in the shelter.
- Options to transport people who can't drive themselves may be limited and increase the risk of exposure.
- Some staff and volunteers may be unable or unwilling to assist in the shelter.

# Questions?



For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

