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**California Department of Public Health
Guidance for Cooling Center on COVID-19
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Extreme heat is a major public health concern in California. Exposure to extreme heat can cause a variety of health problems, including heat stroke and death. Cooling Centers (a cool site or air-conditioned facility designed to provide relief and protection during extreme heat) are used by many communities to protect health during heat events. However, the use of Cooling Centers can potentially provide a route for the transmission of the Novel Coronavirus or the illness known as COVID-19 among both visitors and staff. In addition, groups of people at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness, such as older adults or those with underlying medical conditions, may have the need to congregate at Cooling Centers. This document provides guidance to support a safe, clean environment for members of the public and workers at facilities operated as Cooling Centers.

Individual Control Measures and Screenings

- Provide temperature and symptom screenings for all visitors, including any volunteers, vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the Center. All staff should be screened for temperature and symptoms at the beginning of their shift.
- If possible, provide alternative cooling sites for those showing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath). This may be separate rooms within Cooling Centers or a space that can be used to accommodate visitors with symptoms and separate them from others.
- Staff who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home.
- Visitors and staff should be encouraged to wear cloth face coverings while in the Center. The Center is encouraged to have a supply of face coverings to distribute to anyone who arrives without one. Face coverings must not be shared.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- Perform thorough cleaning on high traffic areas and frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces, including tables, doorknobs, toilets, and handwashing facilities. Limit sharing of items and clean/disinfect shared items between users.
- Clean touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent.
- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [cleaning and disinfection guidelines for community facilities](#), and [cleaning facilities if someone is sick](#).

Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Maintain physical (social) distancing of at least six feet between individuals within Centers.
- Consider creating spaces for individual family units (families who live together do not need to maintain physical distancing in a Cooling Center).
- Jurisdictions may consider using facilities that have not yet been opened as part of the Governor's Roadmap and movement through Stage 2 business sector reopening, such as libraries, community centers, and movie theaters, if they can be configured to safely serve as cooling centers only.

Other Considerations

- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to staff, volunteers, and those visiting Cooling Centers.
- Post signs at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, cloth face coverings, and physical distancing.
- Providing educational materials about COVID-19 in multiple languages, as needed.

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