

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
San Francisco VA Health Care System

Physical Distancing Policy July 27, 2020

PURPOSE: To ensure the health and safety of staff, patients, family members, caregivers and contractors during the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic and minimize the risk of spread of the virus through the use of physical distancing.

POLICY: All individuals on San Francisco VA Health Care System property, including the Medical Center, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and other properties are strongly encouraged to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from other individuals at all times, regardless of whether they are inside or outside.

All individuals are also encouraged to follow the Masking Policy when on campus. When engaged in work that requires physical proximity of less than six feet surgical masks are to be worn.

PROCEDURES:

- All individuals, including employees, patients, caregivers, visitors and contractors are strongly encouraged to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from other individuals at all times, regardless of whether they are inside or outside.
- Handshaking, hugs, and fist bumps are prohibited.
- Separate routes for entry and exit into spaces shall be designated, where possible, to prevent individuals passing one another face-to-face.
- Directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic shall be established, where possible, to prevent individuals from passing one another face-to-face.
- Individuals shall maintain a physical distance of at least six feet, where possible, in hallways, stairwells and corridors. Individuals shall limit passing other individuals in the hallways and stairwells, where possible.
- The number of individuals occupying an elevator at one time shall be limited to two.
- All meetings and trainings shall be moved to a virtual environment.
- All seminars, educational events and other gatherings shall be moved to a virtual environment. If the virtual option is not possible, they shall be postponed or cancelled.
- All employees in telework-eligible positions shall telework to the maximum extent practicable.
- The number of employees in an office at one time shall be limited to maintain a physical distance of six feet between all, where feasible, by utilizing work

practices. This may include scheduling (e.g. staggering start/end times), establishing alternating days for onsite reporting, returning to the office workspace in phases, or continued use of telework.

- Employees sitting at desks, individual workstations or breakrooms shall be separated by at least six feet at all times.
- Keep windows and doors open as much as possible in shared spaces.
- All breakrooms – inpatient and outpatient – and clinical conference rooms will be assessed by Engineering and then signed with the maximal occupancy (1 employee per 40/50 sq ft).
- After the Engineering assessment, chairs will be removed from breakrooms and clinical conference rooms to maintain appropriate distancing.
- Employee breaks shall be staggered, within wage and hour regulations. Employees should be encouraged to eat somewhere other than break rooms. Only one person at a time should eat in a break room.
- Patients shall not be treated in hallways or corridors, including those that are behind doors, such as the Emergency Department or Modules.

Monitoring and Reinforcement of Compliance

Recognizing the professionalism and commitment of all our SFVAHCS employees to the welfare and safety of our veterans, and each other, we anticipate full compliance with this universal masking policy. Nonetheless, we encourage all staff to hold each other accountable, and if there are situations in which an employee does not appear to be complying with the policy, to gently and respectfully, remind that person of the policy, and the need to keep everyone safe. To assure the safety of all SFVAHCS veterans and staff, situations in which there is reportedly persistent, flagrant, non-health-related violation of the policy by an individual, can lead to corrective, including disciplinary, action.

REFERENCES:

- a. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Finfection-control%2Fcontrol-recommendations.html#engineering_controls
- b. <https://coronavirus.ucsf.edu/campus-protocols#socialdistancing>
- c. <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf>
- d. **CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK Medical Center Policy No. 138-50 Effective May 7, 2020**