



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

55 FARMINGTON AVENUE • HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105

Guidance for the Consumer Employer receiving in-home care

The provision of services puts the workers, consumer employers, and household members in close physical contact at potential risk of coronavirus, COVID-19.

Please review the guidelines to reduce your risk of getting or passing COVID-19.

- Ask yourself if you feel feverish or short of breath, or if you have a cough, or have aches and pains, or have lost your sense of taste or smell, or if you just don't feel well. Take your temperature with a thermometer if you can. Presence of a temperature of 100.4 or more, or any of the others listed above are signs and symptoms of COVID 19.
- If you have signs or symptoms of COVID 19, make sure you tell your PCA before they come to your house. Contact your doctor. Contact your case manager.
- Ensure your PCA is also screening him or herself for symptoms of sickness or fever before providing daily care.
- Give your PCA PPE, such as gloves and mask. Also use gowns, goggles and face shields, if available. These may stop you and your PCAs from getting COVID-19
- If you need more PPE, complete the form that is available at this link or ask your PCA to complete it for you: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Health-And-Home-Care/PPE-Request-Form>
- Ensure your PCA is wearing PPE while providing you with care.
- A mask protects others from droplets from the wearer's mouth and nose. Your PCA should wear a mask whether you have COVID 19 or not. It is safest for both you and your PCA to wear masks. If you can tolerate a mask, you can wear a cloth mask if you do not have COVID-19 symptoms. If you do have COVID-19 signs and symptoms you should wear a medical-type mask (a looped procedure mask or surgical mask) like those supplied by DSS.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a website that tells you how to make your PPE last. See it at [strategies for the conservation of PPE](#).¹ This explains what to do if you do not have enough PPE for yourself and for your PCAs.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from your PCA, as much as possible. For any responsibilities that you assign to your PCA that do not require 'hands on care', consider having your PCA provide support from his or home via telephone or video chat.
- Use barriers such as a curtain or a window, between your PCA and yourself as much as you can.
- Make sure you and your PCA wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Make sure you keep a supply of hand sanitizer in your home. Use hand sanitizer especially after touching saliva or "high touch surfaces" like doorknobs.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>

- Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze. Use a disposable tissue if you sneeze or cough as much as possible.
- Try to be aware of touching your face, and try not to touch it.
- If one of your PCAs becomes sick during his or her shift, you should ask them to leave and contact a back-up PCA, family member or friend to give you in-home care.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-[approved cleaning supplies](#)² shown to destroy the COVID 19 coronavirus. Clean frequently touched surfaces and launder bedding and clothes to reduce the spread of coronavirus.
- Medical procedures that make tiny drops of saliva, like open suction and the nebulizer or CPAP treatments, can put COVID-19 in the air, putting your PCA at more risk of getting COVID-19 from you if you have it. Ask your doctor if there is another way to treat your condition during the COVID-19 pandemic. If there isn't another way, you should give the people who help you with these procedures a face mask labeled N95, a gown and a face shield.
- If you have COVID-19 or might have COVID-19, the people who help you should wear N 95 masks, a gown and a face shield, if available.
- If you give a N95 respirator mask to your PCA, it is your responsibility as the consumer employer to help your PCA get proper fit testing to make sure the N95 works properly and protects your PCA. You are also responsible for documentation of this. OSHA has developed guidance for small employers such as yourself. Review this [small entity](#)³ compliance document for additional information. Documentation includes a respiratory protection plan. Components of such a plan include responsible parties, risk assessments, identification of required PPE, identification of the hazards, the medical evaluation component, and training of the employees.
- The effectiveness of PPE depends on proper use.
- For N95 respirators, this quick guidance [from the CDC](#)⁴ may be helpful. The filter on the mask is what keeps the virus out. The PCA must only breathe through the mask's filter, no air may pass around the edges of the mask. That is why the N95 needs to be checked for proper fit every time you PCA puts it on.
- [OSHA provides this guidance to ensure that the face mask is fit checked for a good seal properly before each use to keep air from going in around the edges of the mask.](#)⁵
- Fit test resources include Concentra Occupational Health (866-944-6046) and the Connecticut Fire Academy (860-627-6363). **Individuals who wear a N 95 mask should be medically evaluated prior to using the mask.**
- Put disposable PPE in a plastic bag and throw it in the regular trash.
- Laundry – If you have COVID 19 or think you may, be careful with your laundry. Use regular or gentle laundry cycles. Use gloves and a mask to protect yourself while you do the laundry. If your PCA helps with laundry, make sure they use PPE while doing the chore.

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² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

³ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3384small-entity-for-respiratory-protection-standard-rev.pdf>

⁴ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/A_FS_HCP_COVID19_PPE_11x17.pdf

⁵ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA4015.pdf>