

Coronavirus - COVID-19

Published: 17 March 2020 | [Print](#)

COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus, is the number one public health concern today. The intent of this article is to provide guidance for VFW Posts throughout California.

Public Health Objectives

The objective to canceling events and closing schools is to flatten the infection bell curve, essentially reducing the spike of cases so that the health systems are not overwhelmed. Initially the period of concern is the next 4 weeks, 3/16/2020 through Easter, although it may change. To achieve this objective the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has [published recommendations](#) and [State](#), County and Municipality governments have been issuing bans concerning large gatherings.

Guidance for Districts

District Conventions (elections) must take place 10 to 75 days before the convening of the Department Convention. For California that would be from 3/28/2020 through 6/1/2020. For districts that have meetings or conventions scheduled between 3/16/2020 and 4/11/2020 we are suggesting that meetings be cancelled, and the District Conventions be rescheduled for May 2020. Additionally, during this time, attendance by Department Representatives will be optional. Please note that the installing officer must hold or have held the office of District Commander or above.

Guidance for Posts

Concerning Post Meetings: Although most Post meetings are not large gatherings, attendance by at risk members may not be in their best interest. Post may want to cancel their March meeting if it has not yet taken place; however, Posts are required to hold officer and delegate elections in April. Electronic attendance and using a Poll System for the election may be options, please see Section 203 of the National By-Laws and Section 217 of the Manual of Procedures (MOP) for requirements. One option may be the use of freeconferencecall.com. As other options become available, we will keep you informed.

For those Posts that have to change their meeting place due to their usual place not being available because of COVID-19, the requirements of Section 205 MOP will not be enforced by the Department provided that you make best effort in notifying your membership via email, social media, and calls, and notify the Department HQ of the change.

Concerning Canteen Operations: State, County and Municipality government "bar" closures apply to both public (open) and members only (private) canteens. You must follow all State and local directives as it pertains to the operation of **restaurants and bars which may include carryout or delivery only**.

Concerning Post events and Hall rentals: Gathering size limitations by State, County, and Municipality authorities must be followed. Additionally, recommendations from the CDC should also be followed, which, as of this writing, applies to gatherings of over 10 people. We do not know how long the limitation

is expected to last. We recommend Posts should review their event schedules for the next six to eight weeks and plan accordingly.

Posts should continue to take preventive measures such as having hygiene supplies available for staff and participants, including hand sanitizers and tissues and plan for ways to limit in-person contact for staff supporting your events.

Implement your Buddy Checks and Contact your at Risk Members: Find out..

- How are they doing?
- Do they have support?
- Do they have any needs?
- Do they know how to contact other Post members?

Stay Informed: Locate the media outlets that serve you location and frequently check for updates.

Taking care of our Members

We understand many of our members may be at higher risk of serious illness because of age and chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease and they should take actions to reduce their risk of getting sick. So, we are asking our members to be aware of the symptoms and risks of infection and take precautions against infection.

Know the Symptoms

COVID-19 causes flu and cold-like symptoms, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The symptoms usually appear 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the virus.

How it spreads

The coronavirus spreads through respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes. These droplets fall to surrounding surfaces, and when touched, end up on your hands. The virus then enters the body when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Take precautions against infection

- Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissues or your arm/sleeve and dispose of tissues in the trash
- Avoid people who are sick
- Avoid sharing items like dishes and bedding and keep surfaces clean with disinfecting wipes
- Get a Flu Shot if you haven't already. While there currently is no vaccine to prevent the coronavirus, you are still advised to get a flu shot. The flu vaccine won't protect you from the coronavirus, but it could prevent you from getting both viruses at once.

What to do if you think you are infected

Please stay at home and separate yourself from other people. Call your health care provider for further guidance.

Understand the risk

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the virus a serious public health threat. For the general public, the immediate health risk from the coronavirus currently is low.
- People in communities where ongoing community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated though still relatively low risk of exposure.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Based on current infection rates, the flu is much more common than the coronavirus.

References

CDC Situation Summary: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

California Department of Public Health

: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

VA

Update: https://www.visn19.va.gov/VISN19/news/coronavirus/Coronavirus_Information_and_Updates_SLC.asp

Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>

High Risk: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

Lockdown: <https://calmatters.org/health/2020/03/california-coronavirus-gavin-newsom-senior-citizens-chronic-illness/>

[Gov. Gavin Newsom calls for closure of bars and nightclubs to slow the spread of the coronavirus](#)