In-Person Circulation of Protest Petitions and Signature Gathering in Public Places

These recommendations were developed based on the permissible actions as described in the Protected Activities section of the Stay Home Q&A and also informed by the COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Limited Services at COVID19.CA.gov. When state guidelines become available, adjustments may be necessary. Throughout this document, “worker” refers to people both volunteer and paid.

Overview

On March 19, 2020, the State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health issued an order requiring most Californians to stay at home to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 among the population. As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of the public.

Key prevention practices include:
- physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- use of face coverings by the public (where respiratory protection is not required),
- frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- training workers on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention plan.

On June 18, 2020, CDPH issued Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings, which broadly requires the use of face coverings in California when in public or common spaces. Complete details, including all requirements and exceptions to these rules, can be found in the guidance.

Purpose

This document provides guidance for in-person circulation of protest petitions and the gathering of signatures in any public place. This guidance is intended to support a safe, clean environment for community members and is not intended to revoke or repeal any rights, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA.¹

Protected activities include the first amendment right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government. There are many ways to express political views without holding a physical, in-person gathering. It is strongly recommended that those exercising their right to engage in political expression should utilize alternative channels, such as the many online and broadcasting platforms available in the digital age, in place of in-person gatherings. However, state public health directives do not prohibit in-person protests as long as physical distancing is maintained. When working with large numbers of people, testing is encouraged; free testing is available.

For detailed information about protected activities, view https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/.

Site Specific Plan

- Establish a written, specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every location, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas, train and communicate with workers on the plan and designate a person to implement the plan.
- Identify contact information for the local health department where the facility is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among workers.
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected worker and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive worker(s) and close contacts.
Topics for Worker Training

- Information on COVID-19, how to prevent it from spreading, and which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.

- The importance of not coming to work/volunteer site, if a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell are present, or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19, and to seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. See CDC’s webpage for more details.

- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when workers cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per CDC guidelines); physical distancing; and proper use of face coverings.

Individual Control Measures and Screening

- Provide temperature and/or symptom at the beginning of their shift or encourage to self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using CDC guidelines. Encourage those who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.

- Consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer.

- Follow guidance on the use of face coverings and physical distancing guidance (below).

- Take reasonable measures, including posting signage in strategic and highly-visible locations, to remind the public that they should use face coverings and practice physical distancing.

- Regularly clean and sanitize shared equipment, including but not limited to time clocks, phones, handles, clipboards, pens, and any other equipment between each use or when shared. Never share PPE.

Physical Distancing and Face Covering Guidelines

- Maintain six feet between people from different households. Masks and cloth face coverings should be worn when physical distancing is not possible and are highly recommended otherwise. Face covering use should comply with state and local requirements.

- Implement physical distancing measures. (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where to stand).

- Require workers to avoid handshakes and similar greetings that break physical distance. If the worker is at a residence, they should ensure the interaction occurs at the home’s door or a common area, preferably outdoors.

Additional Considerations for Services that Require Entry to Residential, Commercial, or Public Buildings

- Workers who must enter private residences or commercial or public should wear face coverings while on the premises and should minimize contact with any community member’s personal belongings.

- After completion of work, workers must remove all PPE and face coverings and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Face coverings must be washed before being reused.

- All shared vehicles necessitate use of face coverings and must have hand sanitizer available and lined trash receptacles to be placed in vehicles to properly dispose of disinfectant wipes and other items.

1Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. Limited service providers must comply with all Cal/OSHA standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Additionally, employers should be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.