

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT  
JOINT INFORMATION CENTER  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sept. 11, 2020



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## Sheltering Safely: Make a COVID-19 Safety Plan for Fire Evacuees

Local health officials urge community residents and organizations to take steps to limit exposure to COVID-19 while sheltering wildfire evacuees.

“Protecting lives is the first priority in any emergency,” Humboldt County Health Officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich said. “Right now, our communities are facing multiple emergencies, so we have to protect ourselves and our families from fire and smoke while also preventing transmission of COVID-19.”

Dr. Frankovich noted that there is no way to eliminate the risk of virus transmission in a shelter setting, but there are ways to reduce it. Those housing wildfire evacuees, whether an individual household, church or community center, should put in place a COVID-19 safety plan that includes the following:

- Limit face-to-face interactions and the use of shared spaces.
- Make cleaning and sanitizing supplies readily available, including soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol and trash cans for discarding single-use facial coverings.
- Keep ill individuals separate from those that are healthy.
- Provide single-use dishes and utensils if possible. Non-disposable food service items should be handled with gloves and washed with soap and hot water. Because it is not possible to wear a mask while eating, meals should be distanced and outdoors whenever possible.
- Avoid interacting with anyone other than those who are being sheltered.

Basic COVID-19 safety precautions should be used whenever possible. Those include:

- Wearing facial coverings in public settings and common areas of shelters or homes.
- Washing hands regularly for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol where potable water is unavailable.
- Maintaining physical distance of at least six feet from those who live outside of one’s household unit.

“Our friends and neighbors are in need of help, and Humboldt shows up when needed. We just want that to happen as safely as possible,” Dr. Frankovich said.

A Northern California Regional Evacuation Shelter has been established for wildfire evacuees at

the Humboldt County Fairgrounds (1250 5th St, Ferndale, CA 95536). For more information about available services, go to [humboldt.gov/civicalerts.aspx?AID=3251](http://humboldt.gov/civicalerts.aspx?AID=3251). Call the Humboldt County Wildfire Evacuation Information Line at 707-268-2500 for evacuation information.

For the most recent COVID-19 information, visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) or [cdph.ca.gov](http://cdph.ca.gov). Local information is available at [humboldt.gov](http://humboldt.gov) or during business hours by contacting [covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us) or calling 707-441-5000.

Humboldt County COVID-19 Data Dashboard: [humboldt.gov/dashboard](http://humboldt.gov/dashboard),

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