

Updated 03/26/20

Focus on Blood Center Staff Wellness and Safety

The following measures can help to address staff concerns about their own safety. Front line blood center employees are directly addressed in CDC's [Interim Infection Control Guidance on COVID-19 for Personnel at Blood and Plasma Collection Facilities](#). Communicating your commitment to staff wellness and safety and providing appropriate educational and informational resources can help with morale during the SARS-CoV2 epidemic.

Recommendations for Individuals

Reminder of Personal safety measures

- Make a commitment to [prevent infection](#) at [home](#), in [your community](#), and at [work](#)
- Data shows us the best preventive measure is WASHING YOUR HANDS:
 - frequently
 - with soap and water
 - for *at least 20 seconds* and count slowly!
- Watch the [CDC's video on handwashing](#)
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer
 - make sure it is *at least 60% alcohol*
 - covering all surfaces of your hands
 - rub them together until they feel dry – do not use a paper towel to dry
- Eliminate handshakes
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue away after use
- If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow, *not your hands*

As an additional measure to protect other staff, volunteers and donors, you should:

- Take your own temperature each day before reporting to work
- Stay home if you have an elevated temperature, as defined in your employee policies
- Stay home if you are sick or not feeling well
- See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath
- Alert your supervisor as soon as possible

The Work Environment (refer to [CDC's Interim Guidance](#))

Consider:

- Reconfiguring public areas, if possible, to allow for 6 feet of separation between staff and donors.
- Arranging seating for prospective donors in the waiting area approximately 6 feet apart prior to implementing donor questionnaire.
- Adjusting the physical configuration of the donor cots during blood collection so that donors are approximately 6 feet apart.
- Duplicating this strategy for increased spacing on bloodmobiles by limiting collections to only two donors at a time.

Consider having a plan to redirect prospective donors showing signs of illness; if you plan to further evaluate the health of these individuals, consider identifying a separate area to which they should be directed and make sure staff are trained on this

Follow procedures for cleaning and disinfecting the [work environment](#), including:

- Donor bed and other surfaces in the collection area after each donor.
- Increase the frequency for cleaning and disinfecting the donor screening and refreshment areas, restrooms, doorknobs and other surfaces.
- Empty waste bins frequently.

Staff and Volunteer Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Assess the risk posed by staff members based on the duration and frequency of their contact with donors, visitors, and other staff
- In order to protect staff and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from donor to donor, all staff and volunteers should wear gloves in collection areas and at every station throughout the collection processes
- Remember to change gloves between each donor
- The use of PPE is recommended for healthcare professionals “who come in close contact with [confirmed or possible patients with COVID-19](#) should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment” – this is not the case for most blood center staff
- The use of PPE can be considered for staff who come into closer contact with donors
- At this time, the CDC does not recommend the use of a mask at home, public locations, or at work

Additional strategies to create a safe environment and help protect staff and donors:

- ✓ Follow a donation-by-appointment-only policy.
- ✓ Take the temperature of each individual at the time of arrival at the blood center.
- ✓ Limit donor center access to individuals:

- with appointments
 - who are not accompanied by others
 - who appear to be healthy, free of symptoms.
- ✓ Consider asking prospective donors to wait outside of the center, if doing so can be accomplished while observing the recommended distance of 6 feet of separation between the donor and others, and to await a text message or phone call.
 - ✓ Redirect donors who have symptoms such as coughing or temperature.
 - ✓ Ask donors to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after donation.
 - ✓ Serve each donor individually wrapped snacks and drinks, limiting exposure to the supply, rather than allowing all donors access to the supply of snacks and drinks.