Updated FAQ’s - March 18, 2020

How concerned should people in Orange County, CA be about COVID-19?
There is now laboratory evidence of community transmission in Orange County, indicating that COVID-19 is spreading in the community. People aged 65 and older, and those with chronic health conditions (heart disease, diabetes and lung disease) should stay home. All residents should practice good health hygiene which includes washing your hands, staying home if you are sick, avoiding close contact with people who are sick and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not hands).

Is business travel being restricted?
OCSD is restricting business travel. Caution should be exercised when traveling. Attendance at conferences is suspended until further notice.

Is OCSD discouraging personal travel?
If you are traveling to a country identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) as a Level 3 risk or higher for COVID-19, you must notify your supervisor. You will be required to self-quarantined prior to returning to work per CDC guidelines.

How can we protect ourselves from the virus?
It is recommended that everyone follow everyday prevention practices to minimize their risk of exposure, it is recommended that you:

- Avoid close contact with people.
- No meetings over 10 people. All meetings/interactions in person must follow the 6-feet social distancing guidelines.
- Conduct meetings via the phone or over the computer. Avoid in-person meetings.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning product.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60-95 percent alcohol.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Is OCSD cancelling tours, meetings or events at OCSD?
- All social gatherings/activities cancelled
- All external meetings cancelled unless deemed business critical
- All internal meetings strongly encouraged to be held remotely, phone, email, Teams, etc.

How can we protect ourselves at work?
- As stated above, follow the recommended guidance on hygiene (washing hands and using hand sanitizer) from the CDC and the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA).
- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs.
What is the Sanitation District doing to keep me safe?

• A specialized disinfection team has been hired to clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces. You will recognize them because they will be wearing blue vests. The “Blue Team” will clean: Door handles / crossbars, desk surfaces, tables, chair/arm rests, phone, keyboards, countertops, microwaves, refrigerators, water dispensing machines, light switches, handrails, elevator buttons, bathroom showers, locker rooms, and toilets. Please make sure your desktops are tidy and free of miscellaneous items to make it easier for them to clean.

• The lab has created disinfection spray to help us keep common areas clean. The first batch of bleach-based disinfecting spray, fully equipped with the appropriate safety labels, safety data sheet, usage instruction (based on CDC guidelines), refill instructions, and required PPE; Gloves (required); eye protection (required); plastic apron (optional) and the accompanying documentation is ready for distribution! Additional batches will be prepared as needed.

In order to minimize disruption to regular laboratory operations, division managers are to submit orders/requests to the lab on behalf of their team and arrange pick up.

• Purell and Clorox wipes will be placed in common areas to keep our staff, visitors and contractors safe.

Are any additional precautions or changes being made to the current OCSD operations process?

• As of Thursday, March 19, we will be closing our doors to the public. All business with the public will be done via phone, email, or in a planned arrangement to minimize the exposure risk.

• Telecommuting is a temporary business option that is encouraged where makes business sense. Fill out the telecommuting request form and speak to your supervisor if you are interested in this option.

• Good hygiene practices and use the appropriate personal protective equipment for the work being performed is imperative. Situations like the current coronavirus outbreak should serve as a reminder to work smart, be vigilant, identify hazards, wear the proper PPE, and always protect yourself.

What happens if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

• If you are experiencing symptoms or simply feel ill, stay home, contact your medical provider, and notify your supervisor. Symptoms are very similar to influenza so it’s important to not panic and verify your condition with a medical provider. If you feel you have been exposed to the virus, it is important to minimize the risk of spreading the disease to family and the community. For a complete step by step guide on what to do if you are feeling sick with COVID-19 click here.

What do I do if I feel sick?


• If you are sick, stay home.
• If you are suspected to be infected with the virus, you will be asked to go home
• If you suspect to have the virus, notify your supervisor and immediately contact your medical provider
• Practice good hygiene.
• Avoid contact with others.
• Do not travel while sick.
• Take care of yourself. Rest as much as possible. Drink lots of fluids.

I feel anxious about coronavirus. What can I do?
As information about COVID-19 unfolds, there can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. You can find helpful information and resources [here](#).

Will OCSD keep its doors open?
• As of March 19, OCSD is closing our doors to the public. All business with the public will be done via phone, email, or in a planned arrangement.

Will there be a disruption in service?
• Protecting public health and the environment is of upmost importance to the Orange County Sanitation District. As such, we will continue to provide the essential service of wastewater treatment to our community.

Will OCSD provide tours of its facilities, hold large meeting/events or attend other organization’s large meetings/events?
• We will not be holding any tours, large meetings or events at any of our facilities. We are encouraging individuals to conduct their business over the phone or online.

Is water going to continue to be safe and available?
• We have the utmost trust in our associates in the water industry. Just as it would be inappropriate for them to speak on our behalf, we cannot speak for the water industry. Please refer them to their local water provider as they would be the best to speak about their service.