Interim Guidance on Mail Handling

Purpose

This guidance is designed to give you information about mail handling and preventing the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). It is based on the best information currently available and will be updated when appropriate. Please visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus for updates.

Mail Handling

Much is still being discovered about the virus that causes COVID-19 and how it spreads. This guidance is based on scientific knowledge gained to date, and what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Based on what is known about survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets.

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 is being spread through the mail. Similarly, there is currently no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods. However, individuals should follow everyday actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus, including COVID-19.

After collecting mail from a post office or home mailbox, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Information will be provided on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website as it becomes available.

COVID-19 Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take steps to avoid exposure to this virus. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus, including COVID-19:
• Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
  • If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least
    60% alcohol.
• Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away and
  wash your hands.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, including
  while opening mail
• Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often.
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

DSHS also recommends that you practice social distancing. Social distancing
involves staying away from other people to avoid catching or spreading illness. This
means avoiding large gatherings including work or school settings, remaining in the
home except for essential needs such as groceries, skipping the handshake, and
staying at least six feet away from others when in public.

Further information about COVID-19 can be found on the DSHS website at
www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus.

Resources for Businesses and Employees Handling Mail

Business owners, employers, and members of the general public can find
workplace-specific recommendations in the DSHS COVID-19 Guidance for
Employees and Managers on the DSHS COVID-19 website:
https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/other.aspx

Businesses and employers can find interim guidance for the COVID-19 response on
the CDC website at:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-
employers.html

Information about the United States Postal Service’s (USPS) COVID-19 response
can be found on their website at:
https://about.usps.com/newsroom/statements/usps-statement-on-
coronavirus.htm.