



# Safe Re-opening

PATHWAY TO A SAFE SANTA CLARA

# Who is SEIU USWW

- ▶ SEIU USWW represents nearly 50,000 private sector service workers.
- ▶ The bulk of our membership perform janitorial and security services in a variety of settings – office buildings, tech campuses, hospitals, manufacturing, residential buildings, and more.
- ▶ In Santa Clara County SEIU USWW represents roughly 8,000 workers employed as cleaners and security officers.
- ▶ This workforce comes from Santa Clara County's Latinx, African American, and/or immigrant communities.

# Office Spaces

- ▶ Most private office buildings in Santa Clara County contract out cleaning and security services.
- ▶ The building manager or establishes the frequency and depth of cleaning. The cleaning staff must have the tools to advocate for proper cleaning protocols
- ▶ The building manager or establishes entry and social distancing guidelines and security staff enforce this.
- ▶ There is frequently a financial incentive for building owners and managers to cut corners.
- ▶ Any public health initiative must take this into account

# What standards are needed

- ▶ Worker safety: proper training and PPE, paid quarantine time, hazard pay, proactive notification of infection
- ▶ Disinfection regulations on frequency of disinfection, protocols that include cleaning materials and supplies appropriate for disinfection.
- ▶ Regulations on access, social distancing, and crowd control.

# Enforcement and Evolution

- ▶ There are not effective mechanisms for cleaning or security staff to address public safety risks.
- ▶ Knowledge of COVID 19 and the rate of infection is evolving.
- ▶ Any effective re-opening of office spaces must include the creation of a stakeholder table that includes public health officials, worker representatives, building owners and managers, and service contractors to monitor and adjust regulations.
- ▶ There must be an effective system of reporting and adjudicating violations of these regulations



***SEIU United Service Workers West  
Cleaning and Security Elements of a  
Public Health Standard for Reopening Santa Clara County's Economy***

***June 3, 2020***

Reopening Santa Clara County's economy requires a new public health standard for enhanced cleaning, disinfection and social distancing to ensure effective infection control in the places our friends and neighbors gather, study, live and work. This standard must recognize the diversity in property settings including but not limited to offices, residential settings, airports, corporate campuses, stadiums, government buildings, cultural institutions, retail environments, health care settings, factories, schools and universities.

Now more than ever, our society has an obligation to uphold the worth and dignity of the men and women, who provide California's essential cleaning and security services. They are overwhelmingly immigrants and people of color, a sector of the working-class which for far too long has faced the brunt of racism and injustice.

The time is now to ensure that workers who are on the frontlines and are essential to have a voice in shaping and monitoring a new public health standard. The standard must include certified training by Public Health and Occupational Health authorities. Including training on the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment, effective implementation of cleaning and disinfection methods, and professional enforcement of screening and social distancing measures. We must not repeat the mistakes of the great recession where quality was sacrificed in order to achieve lower costs. Instead we must demand quality services in order to achieve our goal of containing the spread of COVID-19.

**A Voice for Property Service Workers in the COVID-19 Response**

Public health is better protected when workers can share their knowledge of hazards and determine the conditions needed to protect themselves and the public. Essential workers and their unions must be at the table helping to shape our county's responses to COVID-19. We need a table where industry leaders, public health professionals, industrial hygienists, government and workers and their unions can collaborate to set broad frameworks to drive a safe and just reopening of the California economy. These standard setting bodies shall work to implement guidelines in the following areas.

**Worker Safety and Training**

Workers must have the necessary Protective Equipment to carry out their work to include gloves, mask, goggles, face shield and other protective equipment as necessary. Employers must have a plan on informing workers of known exposures and exposure risk. Proper training that has been certified by California Public Health and Occupational Health must be provided for Security Officers and Cleaning Personnel if they are to comply with new requirements.

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Properties should only be reopened when they can demonstrate sufficient PPE to protect staff who conduct the full scope of cleaning and security measures under new public health standards. Equipment should be supplied based on need, with clear mechanisms for workers to report issues. Training must be provided on protocol related to PPE, such as use and disposal.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Standard**

This standard must include guidance for disinfection for high touch areas, elevators, restrooms, locations where bodily fluids exist, public spaces, high traffic areas, enclosed spaces. The standard must address frequency, cleaning methods and equipment/materials required that are consistent with California Public and Occupational Health recommendations. The Standard must address appropriate staffing levels to ensure that the public and occupational health standards are met given dwell times necessary to kill the virus.

The Standard must explicitly define frequencies and monitoring for the following types of cleaning and disinfection tied to the relative levels of foot traffic in a given area:

- a. Daily, repeated cleaning and disinfection of
  - i. high-touch surfaces
  - ii. Entry ways and areas accessible to the general public
  - iii. Elevators and restrooms (continuously throughout the day)
  - iv. high-traffic and common areas, such as lobbies, conference rooms, kitchens, employee break rooms, dining halls, gyms and hallways.
  - v. sanitization stations
- b. Cleaning and disinfection of confined spaces, such as stairwells, closets, individual offices, cubicles, and others.
- c. Standards for cleaning materials, supplies and frequencies specific to the types of surfaces throughout the property, with consideration to the latest understanding of how long the virus survives on different surfaces, including:
  - i. Soft surfaces, such as carpeted floor, rugs and drapes.
  - ii. Hard surfaces where the virus can survive for several days, such as glass, wood, plastic and stainless steel.
- d. Repeated disinfection of waste baskets, including PPE disposal receptacles
- e. disinfection of equipment, particularly shared equipment.

**Security Standard - Access, Social Distancing & Crowd Control**

Security Officers play a major role in screening the public who enters facilities. Therefore we must set Security standards to address crowd control, monitoring, screening, temperature checking and reporting methods consistent with California's Public and Occupational Health directives and guidance. The standard must also address appropriate staffing levels to ensure public safety.

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These security measures should incorporate the following:

- f. Reflect differing levels of exposure and specific hazards faced by security officers, occupants of the property and the general public accessing the property
- g. Phase reopening areas not essential to operations or commerce, such as gyms.
- h. Define clear protocols on screening people upon entry and assign this duty only to licensed and certified security officers provided with appropriate PPE.
- i. Define, monitor and enforce occupancy limitations to allow for social distancing.
- j. Reinforce social distancing, such as with the use of queue marks in some areas, spaced 6 feet apart and maintain adequate security staffing to enforce.
- k. Post clear signage on COVID-19 rules and procedures
- l. Clearly communicate property guidelines and revisions in response to changing circumstances, such as new government orders, the latest science on infection control, or any other public health factors.

### **Enforcement Mechanism to Ensure Compliance**

The Bureau of Security Investigative Services, the State's Janitorial Services Registry and the California Department of Public Health's inspection grading system must be expanded to include COVID-19 safety and security standards in a broad range of properties. This will require collaboration among appropriate State Agencies and worker committees to ensure compliance of standards.

Enforcement tools should fall into three basic categories and rely on expansion of existing mechanisms rather than creation of new ones:

- m. State Contractor Registry and Licensing systems
  - i. Janitorial contractors:  
California's Labor Commissioner already maintains a janitorial registry which requires janitorial providers comply with certain standards and training requirements as a condition of doing business in California. The registry could easily add compliance with the training and worker protection requirements of COVID-19 reopening to the requirements of the Labor Commissioner's janitorial registry.
  - ii. Security contractors:  
California's Department of Consumer Affairs already houses the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS), which controls security training and licensing standards in California. BSIS could easily add compliance with the training and worker protection requirements of COVID-19 reopening to their standards requirements.



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n. Property Inspections

California's Department of Public Health already has established procedures for inspecting and publicly posting safety scoring and grading of California businesses such as hospitals and restaurants. CDPH also has authority to fine or close businesses who do not comply with Public Health requirements.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, CDPH will need to expand a similar grading and enforcement process with comparable authority to fine or close businesses that do not comply with COVID-19 safety and security measures. CDPH will provide the public with an easily recognizable measure of the relative public safety of the properties they frequent.

o. COVID-19 Compliance Committees

Individual properties should establish committees that include property managers, tenants, janitors and security officers to monitor compliance and adjust protocols as necessary.

**Building a New Economy that Works for All**

Paid quarantine time, hazard pay, the right to recall for workers who have been laid off, and free access to testing are critical to avoiding the spread of the virus. These critical policies help relieve the economic pressure keeping workers on the job even when it may increase risks for themselves or others. This is important because data has shown that workers of color in the service sector have among the highest rates of COVID-19 cases.

**2. Essential Workers: Staffing, Hazard Pay, Quarantine, Retention and Right to know<sup>1</sup>**

a. **Staffing:** Properties must maintain sufficient staffing levels of essential cleaning and security workers to cover this work as a condition of reopening and remaining open. Determination of "sufficient" in this case should be based on clear and objective measures of required security and disinfection methods.

These measures should be informed by the heightened standards on disinfection as well as reasonable accommodations that can be made to protect workers and the general public - such as staggered shifts or the full clearing of offices and restrooms prior to entry for cleaning. No property should be reopened without sufficient staff to effectively meet standards.

b. **Hazard Pay:** Essential cleaning and security staff serve as vital front line resources for infectious disease control. Their jobs require continuous exposure to potentially infected individuals and surfaces as their basic job duties. The essential and high risk nature of these responsibilities should be recognized and

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<sup>1</sup> Right to know/right to refuse before entering a reportedly infected space

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rewarded while our society continues to operate with neither disinfection or cure for COVID-19.

- c. **Proactive and Responsive Quarantine System:** The nature of cleaning and security workers' jobs creates an escalated risk for the entire worksite and everyone in it if one of these workers is reporting to work with an active COVID-19 infection. Worksites must prioritize testing of those most exposed to the public to allow for narrowly-targeted interventions and containment measures. For properties to open safely and remain safe, public health policies must enable workers to self-isolate, get the disinfection they need, and care for sick family members without loss of income or employment. These policies and approaches include:
  - i. Mechanisms to guarantee fully paid sick leave and free disinfection
  - ii. Fully paid proactive quarantine for workers who have been exposed at work, home or community while awaiting test results.
  - iii. Priority for expedited, free testing for essential workers, including Janitors and Security Officers, who must physically report to work.
  - iv. Clearly communicated quarantine plans that address when:
    - 1. A worker or member of their household tests positive or exhibits symptoms
    - 2. Someone in the property tests positive or exhibits symptoms
    - 3. Contact tracing relevant to all of the above
  - v. Protection from discipline or retaliation for workers that must use quarantine measures to care for themselves or their families.
  
- d. **Retention:** Essential cleaning and security workers subject to COVID-19 related layoff or quarantine must have a right to return to their original jobs when the need for layoff or quarantine ends.
  
- e. **Informed Consent:** Before requesting employees clean or enter potentially infected areas, Employers must inform employees of the reported potential infection and source of that report. There will be no retaliation against employees refusing to enter potentially infected areas. Employers must make every reasonable effort to reassign employees in such cases.