

# Safely Entering a Customer's Home During COVID-19

By Marty Mazzella, President, Ti-SALES

**July 2020** | While many non-essential businesses have closed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the water industry is working as hard as ever to deliver safe, clean, high quality drinking water to individuals and businesses around the world. We're fortunate that most of our daily interactions, such as meter readings, can be performed without entering customers' homes; however, technicians still need to perform installations, meter repairs, inspections, and other critical services.

We've compiled the following tips and best practices that our utility customers

have been following to reduce the risk of infection. (Of course, **none of this advice should replace following all applicable CDC guidelines for your area.** Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/) for more information.)

(Details on each step on the following pages!)

*Note:* in most cases you shouldn't need to change clothes between customer visits. Just in case, though, keep a clean change of clothes in your vehicle in case a customer unexpectedly becomes sick or coughs on you.



## 1 Pre-Screen Customers

If there's any risk, reschedule.

## 2 Have Clear Protocol

Make your customers part of the safety plan.

## 3 Prepare Yourself

Have everything you need on hand.

## 4 When You Arrive

One last check-in, and put on your PPE.

## 5 Perform the Work

Minimize contact with surfaces and people.

## 6 After the Work

Clean up and dispose of your single-use items.

# Safely Entering a Customer's Home During COVID-19, *cont.*



Safety begins before you even arrive at your customer's home or work site. Screen your customers while scheduling their appointment, making sure to ask the following:

- Does anyone at this location have or has been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Is anyone at this location under a quarantine order?
- Is anyone at this location experiencing symptoms of fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, nausea or vomiting, headache, a new loss of taste or smell, or diarrhea?

If the answer to any of the above is yes, reschedule the appointment for a later date. If all answers are no, make sure to ask your customer to reschedule if there are any changes before the appointment occurs.

The same screening questions also apply to the technician; if you or any of the members of your household have potentially been exposed to COVID-19, reschedule the appointment for a later date.



While scheduling the appointment, instruct your customers that they will need to agree to the following:

- Create a clear path from the entryway to the work space. This includes removing all items blocking the way and opening all doors so that the technician will not have to touch any surface. If feasible, reduce risk by having the technician enter through the bulkhead or otherwise bypassing the customer's living space.
- Ensure that only ONE person will be escorting or in the same room as the worker at any time. (Exception: if the customer requires an interpreter.)
- Ensure that any person in the same room as the technician will be wearing a mask that covers both their nose and their mouth at all times.

Make certain that your customer understands that if they are unable to comply with this protocol or if anyone in the location shows symptoms of COVID-19, the technician will immediately exit and reschedule their appointment.

Consider sending a follow-up email or text message with details of the job and the protocol they have agreed on.

## Safely Entering a Customer's Home During COVID-19, *cont.*



To reduce risk, take care of as much business as possible outside of the home or work site. Minimize the time spent inside your customer's home by making sure you have everything with you for the task, including the following:

- All necessary materials and tools to complete the job
- All necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), including mask, latex or nitrile gloves, and eye protection
- Extra pair of latex or nitrile gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes or solution
- Work mat or paper towels/shop towels
- (Optional) Booties/disposable shoe coverings

If feasible, consider performing select tasks (assembling components, etc) in advance to further reduce the time spent in the customer's home or work site.

If a signature will be needed, consider using touchless methods (ie an e-signature sent from the customer's own device).



Once you arrive at the home or work site, it's time for sanitization, PPE, and confirming the site is ready and safe.

- Wipe down your tools with disinfectant wipes and solution.
- Confirm with the homeowner/contact person (over the phone/before entering) that nothing has changed regarding their COVID-screening since scheduling the appointment.
- Confirm that a clear path exists between entry and work space, including all doors opened.
- Confirm their understanding of protocol (only one person in the same room as the technician at all times, wearing a mask covering their nose and mouth).
- Put on all PPE, including mask, latex or nitrile gloves, and eye protection (at minimum) and booties (if using).

Where feasible, consider entering the site without passing through living spaces, such as through a bulkhead.

## Safely Entering a Customer's Home During COVID-19, *cont.*



Minimize all contact with surfaces while within the customer's home or work site.

- Proceed directly to the work area without touching any surfaces (doors, counters, walls).
- Lay down a work mat or shop towel/paper towel to place your tools or items on. Never put your tools directly onto a surface; as you work, keep them either in your gloved hand, in your toolbox, or on your work mat.
- If possible, do not use the customer's bathroom or sinks. If needed, however, wash your hands thoroughly and put on a fresh pair of latex or nitrile gloves. Keep your first pair to dispose of with other used items.
- When you have completed the work, thoroughly clean and wipe down the work area and any new equipment.
- Have the homeowner/contact person open any doors that have closed between the work area and entry as you exit.

If at any time during the visit the homeowner/contact person does not follow the agreed-on protocol, or if anyone in the home shows symptoms of COVID-19, immediately exit the property and reschedule the work.



Once you've left the property, make sure you leave any possible germs behind.

- Wipe down all your tools with disinfectant wipes or solution.
- Throw all your disposable wipes and pads into an enclosed trash receptacle.
- Remove your PPE in the following order: booties (if used), gloves, eye protection, mask.
- Throw all of your single-use PPE (gloves, booties, etc) into your trash receptacle.
- Wipe down your eye protection with disinfectant wipes or solution.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

At the end of your work day, dispose of all items in your trash receptacle.

*Many thanks to Fall River Community Utilities, Weston & Sampson, and Baystate Winsupply for sharing their COVID protocols and resources. Reach out to Ti-SALES with any questions at [info@tisales.com](mailto:info@tisales.com).*

# COVID-19 Customer Screening and Protocol Checklist

*We encourage you to use and adapt this checklist for your specific needs. Have a suggestion to improve this resource? Share it with us at [info@tisalessales.com](mailto:info@tisalessales.com).*

## Health Screening

### Yes/No

Does anyone at this location have or has been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 14 days?

Is anyone at this location under a quarantine order?

Is anyone at this location experiencing symptoms of fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, nausea or vomiting, headache, a new loss of taste or smell, or diarrhea?

**If the answer to any of the above is yes**, reschedule the appointment for a later date. Otherwise, proceed.

If there are any changes between now and the scheduled service, we require you to reschedule the appointment. Do you understand and agree?

## Protocol Understanding

### Yes/No

Before the technician enters your location, you will need to create a clear path from the entryway to the workspace. This includes removing all items blocking the way and opening all doors so that the technician will not have to touch any surface. Do you understand and agree?

Only **ONE** person will be permitted to escort or be in the same room as the technician at any time, except if an interpreter is needed. Do you understand and agree?

Any person in the same room as the technician must wear a mask that covers both their nose and their mouth at all times. Do you understand and agree?

If you are unable to comply with this protocol or if anyone in your location shows symptoms of COVID-19, the technician will immediately exit and reschedule your appointment. Do you understand and agree?