

HOW TO CONSTRUCT A CURBSIDE WAITING ROOM

By **RevenueWell**

June 24, 2020

Curbside waiting rooms and curbside check-in have become a necessity for dental practices. Here's how to successfully communicate, and create, this new reality to patients.

In order to increase safety measures, we've seen many [RevenueWell](#) customers implement curbside check-ins, effectively moving their dental waiting rooms outside.

By [texting patients through RevenueWell](#) and going digital with [RevenueWell Forms](#), these practices have been able to seamlessly introduce a completely new, contactless check-in process.

- There are four steps to setting up your curbside waiting room:
- Proper Scheduling — Setting expectations for patients
- Day-Of Reminder — Ensuring patients remember their appointment and understand your new check-in procedure
- Notice of Arrival — Communicating with patients when they show up for their visit
- Hands-Free Handoff — Walking a patient back for their visit

Setting up a curbside waiting room

Following is an in-depth look at your curbside waiting room.

Proper Scheduling

Everything starts here. All your extra precautions and new hygiene guidelines begin with a proper scheduling.

Set expectations early. Gently inform patients that, while your commitment to service remains unchanged, you do have new safety protocol.

While it's impossible to bat 1.000, odds are most of your patients will appreciate both the effort and transparency.

When you send your reminder email and/or text, include a link to your digital forms and give the following briefing for how their visit will go:

We look forward to seeing you at your upcoming appointment. For the safety of our team and patients, our waiting room is currently out of order. Please fill out the attached forms prior to your visit. Anyone who has not filled out their paperwork online will not be seen. On the day of your appointment, please text or call us upon arrival, and we will walk you directly to the back. Thank you for your understanding.

Day-of reminder

Your day-of appointment reminder doesn't need to be as thorough as the previous reminder, though you do need to reinforce new protocol.

If a patient hasn't filled out their forms, remind them that these must be done prior to the visit. If you are using a new form, such as a COVID-19 screening form, remember to let patients know — some may skip over any mention of paperwork because they've already completed health history or treatment consent forms.

Ultimately, your curbside waiting room fails without online forms. They eliminate any need or transfer of paper, pens, clipboards, and tablet — saving you a lot of extra sanitizing. Beyond that, patients filling out their paperwork reduces any need for a traditional waiting room.

Along with reinforcing online forms, remind patients to text or call when they arrive. Clarify that you'll come get them from their car, the lobby, or sidewalk upon their arrival.

Between your scheduling, first reminder, and day-of reminder you have sufficiently set expectations.

Notice of arrival

Showtime! Here's where all your thorough communication pays off.

When your patient arrives for their visit, they text or call to inform you. It's best to have a script handy — for both texts and phone calls — so any team member who receives the notification delivers the appropriate info. Your script should include the following:

- A thank you
- A time estimate for how long until you'll walk them back
- Any notes on where to meet (i.e. Should they enter when instructed, will you go outside to get them, etc.)
- Confirmation of the best method to reach them (call, text, the number just in case their phone is dying, etc.)
- Beyond these items, include any extra instructions that you want the patient to know (ex. It's okay to leave your mask in the car)

Hands-free hand off

At this point, it should be business as usual. When you're ready for the patient, call or text that it's time for their appointment and walk them to the operatory.

When walking to the operatory, be brisk, but don't hurry. Hold all doors for the patient. And talk with the patient just as you always have.

If the team member walking patients back will be wearing a mask, you should mention this in communications prior to the appointment.

The goal here is not just moving a person into the operatory. It's establishing rapport and making your patient feel comfortable.

The moment they step into your office, each patient should knowingly experience the same great service they've always received from your team.

A curbside waiting room may be different at first. So long as you properly communicate this new process to patients, it will quickly feel like a process that's always been in place.

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