COVID 19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

REOPENING GUIDANCE
FAQs FOR MANAGERS OF NON-HEALTHCARE WORKERS

If you manage a workplace, the following public health guidance can help in preventing a potential COVID-19 outbreak. The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for covered employers and employees.

What to do if an Employee Shows Up to Work Sick? They are Unsure if It's COVID-19.

- Send the sick employee home. If they have mild symptoms, consider teleworking or some other alternative for working remotely. (Guidance on How to Care for Mild COVID-19 Symptoms) If the employee is experiencing any fever, shortness of breath, or cannot keep fluids down, have them contact their doctor. If they do not have a doctor, they can call the Ask-My-Nurse Line at 713.634.1110
    - Immediately separate from others and send home employees who arrive to work with symptoms (including fever, cough, or shortness of breath) or become sick during the day. Clean and disinfect any areas the employee contacted.

An Employee has a Suspected Case Of COVID-19 but has Not Been Tested

- The employee will follow the same steps outlined for an employee who tested positive for COVID-19. Employees that had close contact with the sick employee while the person had symptoms or within 48 hours (2 days) before symptoms appeared should go home and start a 14-day period of self-quarantine. To help us avoid overburdening the health system, you should not require a healthcare provider's note to justify the absence of an employee who is sick with respiratory illness

What Should I Do About Other Employees Who May have had Contact with the Sick Employee?

- Other employees should asses their previous contact with the sick employee
- Employees that had close contact with the sick employee while the person had symptoms or within 48 hours (2 days) before symptoms appeared should go home and start a 14-day period of self-quarantine
    - Close contact is any contact closer than 6 ft or more than 10 minutes OR unprotected exposure to body fluids. For example, when a person coughs or sneezes close by or when two people share a drink or eating utensil.
- Employees that have not had close contact with the sick employee while the person has symptoms or during the two before the start of symptoms can stay on the job. Remind them to follow general steps to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

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What Steps do I Need to Take if an Employee Reports they have Tested Positive For COVID-19? They didn't have any Noticeable Symptoms when they were at Work, but they Work Closely with Other People and may have Exposed them.

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The employee who tested positive must stay home and self-isolate (link to self-isolate document). They may return to work when they meet all three of the following criteria:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (having no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
- The individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

An employee with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 should self-quarantine at home for 14 days from the last date of exposure. They can return to work at the end of the 14 days if they do not develop symptoms.

- If an employee is confirmed to have the virus that causes COVID-19, assess who has had close contact with this employee. Inform other employees of their possible exposure, while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What Should I do if Multiple Employees Get Sick?

- In the case of a workplace outbreak, consider suspending operations if a significant number of employees have been in close contact with a confirmed case or are diagnosed with COVID-19. Please contact your local health department if you suspect an outbreak of COVID-19 in your workplace.
    - For organizations and businesses in unincorporated Harris County, please call 832.927.7575.
    - Ask for the Epi line.

What if a Customer or Client Shows up with Symptoms of Illness?

- If your worksite gets customer or client traffic, post signs at the entrance requesting people who are sick not to enter. Provide tissues, trash receptacles, and non-touch hand sanitizer dispenser near entrances or frequently visited areas. Make sure employees wear a face covering and follow social distancing guidance between themselves and all visitors. If the employee must be close to the customer, minimize the time together to less than 10 minutes. After the visitor leaves, use EPA-registered disinfectant products to wipe down doorknobs/push bars, elevator buttons, restroom doors, etc., that the visitor may have touched.

What Steps do I Take if an Employee is Exposed to COVID-19 After Interacting with a Customer, Client, or Business Associate, that has Reported to us they've Tested Positive?

- If possible, review the employee's interaction with the person. The employee should quarantine at home for 14 days from the date of contact if the employee was within 6 ft of the sick person for more than 10 minutes or had unprotected direct contact with bodily fluids such as cough or sneeze on the face. Check if other employees may have been exposed and need to quarantine. If none of the employees has close, prolonger contact with the infected visitor, there are not any steps to take to protect employees. Continue infection control.
- However, take steps to protect other customers, clients, or business associates may have been close to the visitor. The close contact could have occurred in an outdoor line to get into your facility, in a line inside your facility, in a waiting room outside your office, or at a standing desk where customers stood side-by-side to fill in forms or carry out other business. If you know the identities of people who visited your facility at the same time as the infected visitor and may have had close contact with the infected individual, you should contact them and inform them that they need to home quarantine.
- If you do not know the identities of people who may have been exposed by a visitor or employee, the next best thing is to post a notice on your website or social media page. The notice should let people who visited your facility when the infected person was there know about the risk and the need to monitor their health. Refer them to the CDC Public Health Recommendations for Community-related Exposure.

How Should Retail Businesses Practice Social Distancing Between Staff and Customers at the Cash Register?

- Public health guidance around social distancing aims for a space of 6 ft and contact of no more than 10 minutes between any two people. Consider placing markers on the floor near the register in your store to keep the paying customer at the far end of the conveyor belt with other customers 6 ft back from them. Each customer should come forward only when it is time to bag purchases and pay. An alternative, in case it is hard to get customers to comply with the 6-foot guideline, is to set up a see-through barrier at each register that physically separates the cashier from the customer. You are encouraged to use any strategy that reduces close face-to-face contact between employees and customers.

Planning for Absenteeism

- Determine how you will operate with a reduced staff if employees cannot work due to illness, staying home to care for sick family members and those who must stay home to watch their children
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions, so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent

Free COVID-19 Testing is Available for Everyone

We encourage business owners and employees to get free testing at a testing site. The updated online self-assessment tool is confidential and designed to serve the public in the Greater Houston area. To register for testing, visit http://covidcheck.hctx.net/. For those who do not have access to the online tool, call **832-927-7575** to get scheduled for testing. Free testing is available regardless of citizenship status and for those who are uninsured.

Employees should **not** return to work if they are sick. If an employee has a sick family member they live with or has been near an ill person, they should notify their employer immediately.

Please go to www.hcphtx.org for any additional information on how to keep yourself or employees safe during this pandemic.

*People at higher risk for severe illness are those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.

Additional Information is Available

The Governor's Report to Open Texas

CDC Business & Employer Resources

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