

Phase Two Guidance
Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): First Steps for Non-Healthcare Employers when Employees Test Positive for COVID-19

This guidance provides instruction on steps employers can take if someone with COVID-19 reports having visited or worked in their establishment and recommended steps to help decrease the risk of spread of COVID-19 in their establishment while awaiting contact from DC Health. Prompt action by employers may also lessen the need for business closures.

Employers should encourage employees to report a diagnosis of COVID-19 to them as soon as possible. To ensure a clear and efficient process for communication, employers must designate a point of contact at the business that an employee can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information. This person may also serve as a point of contact for communication with DC Health (or employers may designate another person for this role).

This guidance is a companion document for business-specific guidance, which can be found at coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo. Please refer to those documents for specific requirements that must be followed in Phase Two in order to operate in DC. **This guidance is intended for non-healthcare employers.**

First Steps for Employers

- When informed of an employee's positive test, employers should **review the COVID-19 positive employee's schedule** over the past week and obtain information regarding:
 - If the COVID-19 positive employee was at the business **during their infectious period**.
 - The physical areas at the business location where the COVID-19 positive employee had been during their infectious period.
 - If the COVID-19 positive employee was in close contact with others (e.g., staff or clients) while in the establishment during their infectious period.
 - The **infectious period** starts two days before symptom onset or date of test if asymptomatic, and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset/test date.
 - A **close contact** is anyone who was within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period (i.e. childcare provider for infants, servers).
 - If the employee was not at the establishment during their infectious period, the risk of exposure is minimal, and no further steps are necessary other than continuing everyday precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Employers should gather the following information to share with DC Health:
 - The first and last name of the employee and close contacts
 - The employee's job role at the business
 - The date of the positive test (or symptom onset date), if available
 - When the employee was last physically present at the business
 - The best contact phone number for the employee and close contacts
 - The state of residence of the employee and close contacts
 - Even if the COVID-19 positive employee is not a DC resident, the business still needs to report the case to DC Health as per establishment specific guidelines (DC Health will share information with the employee's state of residence).
- Employers should inform the COVID-19 positive employee that DC Health will call them and to please respond to this contact.

- DC Health will contact the **business** and the positive **employee**. The positive employee may receive calls from both the [DC Contact Trace Force](#) and the epidemiology team.
- Employers must **notify other employees** about the positive COVID-19 case at the business. **The notification must not identify the COVID-19 positive employee.** The information shared with other employees must include:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Referral to the *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19*, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance;
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.
- Employers may instruct any identified *possible* close contacts of the COVID-19 positive employee to stay home from work and quarantine at home until DC Health's investigation is complete. DC Health will either confirm them as a close contact and give guidance on duration of quarantine, or determine they were not a close contact and allow them to return to work.
- Employers must **clean and disinfect** the areas at the business where the COVID-19 positive employee has been. Please follow *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection* at coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.
 - **NOTE:** If more than 7 days have passed since the COVID-19 positive employee has been at the business location, no special cleaning and disinfection is necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection protocols for the business.
- This process can help employers make more immediate decisions about the need to take temporary precautions, such as closure of certain areas of the business if a COVID-19 case was reported.

Reporting to DC Health

- **Notify DC Health** as soon as possible about the positive COVID-19 case by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website: dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements
 - Submit a **Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form**;
 - An investigator from DC Health will follow up within 24-48 hours (based on the type of business) to all appropriately submitted forms.
 - Once DC Health's follow-up process to identify close contacts is complete, this information will be shared with the point of contact identified on the form.

Return to Work

- It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that employees are notified of exposures and are allowed to complete their isolation and quarantine periods.
- Employers should not require a negative COVID-19 test for an employee to return to work.
- Employees with confirmed COVID-19 must stay at home until:
 - **At least 10 days** have passed since their symptoms first started
AND
 - At least 24 hours after their fever resolves without medication
AND
 - Their other symptoms have improved.
- If they tested positive but never had any symptoms, then the employee must stay at home for 10 days after the date of their positive COVID-19 test.

- Persons who experienced **severe illness or who are severely immunocompromised** may have to isolate for up to 20 days after their symptoms first started or after their positive test result, in consultation with their healthcare provider.
- Employees who are a close contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19 may return to work 14 days after the date of their last exposure.
 - **Please note that even if a close contact tests negative for COVID-19, they must continue to quarantine their entire 14-day period.**
- For more information, please see *Guidance for Persons Who Tested Positive for COVID-19* and *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19* at coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.