

**Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19):
First Steps for Businesses when an Employee or Patron Tests Positive for COVID-19**

This guidance provides instruction on steps businesses can take if an employee (including contract staff and volunteers), a patron of a business, or a guest/attendee at an event reports testing positive for COVID-19. **This guidance is intended for non-healthcare settings.** Following these recommendations will help decrease the risk of spread of COVID-19 at a business establishment. Prompt action by businesses may lessen the need for facility closures.

Definitions

Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from 2 days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic infected people, 2 days prior to positive test collection) until the time the infected person is isolated.

Infectious period: The time period during which someone is infectious, or able to spread their infection to others. The infectious period for COVID-19 starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset (or test date for people who do not have symptoms).

Incubation period: The time period between when someone is exposed to an infectious agent and when the first symptoms may appear. The incubation period is different for every pathogen. The incubation period for COVID-19 is 2 to 14 days.

Isolation: The process of separating individuals with symptoms of an infection or confirmed diagnosis of an infection (like COVID-19) away from others, to prevent spread of a pathogen.

Quarantine: The process of separating individuals who have been exposed to an infectious agent (like COVID-19) before they develop symptoms of infection or test positive for infection, for the duration of time that covers the incubation period for the pathogen to prevent further spread.

Fully Vaccinated: An individual is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after they received the final dose of a COVID-19 primary¹ vaccination series (after the second dose of a 2-dose series, or after one dose of a single-dose vaccine).

First Steps for Businesses

- Encourage and support employees in getting their COVID-19 vaccine. This will minimize the number of people who need to quarantine if a case is identified at your business. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, free, and available to anyone aged 12 and older. You can find a vaccination site near you at coronavirus.dc.gov/page/get-vaccinated or vaccines.gov/search/. Find out more about the COVID-19 vaccines at coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine.
- Businesses 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, businesses should designate a point of contact (POC) at the business that an employee can notify if

¹ The standard vaccine course before any extra (i.e., “booster”) doses

they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information. This person may also serve as a POC for communication with DC Health (or businesses may designate another person for this role).

- If someone reports a positive test for COVID-19 to the business, the designated POC should speak to that person to gather necessary information and to understand their interactions with others during their infectious period.
 - This process can help businesses make more immediate decisions about the need to take temporary precautions, such as closure of certain areas of the facility if a COVID-19 case is reported.
 - If the positive individual was present at the facility during their infectious period, the POC should attempt to identify potential close contacts at the business and notify close contacts about their exposure and need to quarantine.

COLLECT

- Collect the following information about the person who tested positive:
 - Their first and last name
 - Their best contact phone number
 - Their job role at the business (if the person is an employee)
 - The date the person first noticed symptoms (or positive test date if the person does not have symptoms)
 - Date(s) the person was physically present at the facility
 - The physical areas at the facility where the COVID-19 positive person was present during their infectious period.
- Refer the COVID-19 positive person to *Guidance for People Who Test Positive for COVID-19 and their Household Members* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance. Businesses must allow employees who test positive to stay home from work until their isolation period is complete.
- If the person **was not at the facility 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.
- Encourage the COVID-19 positive person to provide thorough information to the DC Contact Trace Force (or the contact trace force of their home jurisdiction), so that all contacts can be identified and provided appropriate quarantine instructions.

IDENTIFY

- **Identify potential close contacts (at your facility) of the person who tested positive**
 - Close contacts could include workers and patrons/guests/attendees
- Collect the following information about close contacts if possible:
 - Their names and best phone number (e.g. from employee roster, bookings)
 - Vaccination status if available
 - Date the close contact last had exposure to the person who tested positive
- To better understand the positive person's interactions with other people, review additional data sources as necessary (e.g., review schedule/calendar, appointments/bookings/visitor logs, guest lists, seat assignments, video footage).

NOTIFY

- **Businesses can consider notifying close contacts that they were potentially exposed to COVID-19 at your facility, so that they may begin quarantine.**
- **The notification must not identify the COVID-19 positive individual.**

- Businesses must allow employees who are close contacts who are required to quarantine to stay home from work until their quarantine period is complete.
- The information shared with potentially exposed individuals should 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.
- Close contacts of a person with confirmed COVID-19 are **NOT** required to quarantine if:
 - They have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days
 - OR**
 - They are fully vaccinated against COVID-19
 - AND**
 - Do not currently have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - Close contacts of a person with COVID-19 who are not required to quarantine **must continue to self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days** after the date of their exposure. If a close contact develops symptoms during this time period, they must isolate and follow up with their health care provider for testing.
 - Fully vaccinated people (who do not have a personal history of COVID-19 within the last 90 days) who are close contacts of a person with COVID-19 should also get a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after the date they were exposed. For more information, see *Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

CLEAN AND DISINFECT

- The approach to cleaning and disinfecting if a COVID-19 positive person has been in a facility depends on the amount of time that has passed since the person was present.
 - If **24 hours or less** have passed, businesses should **clean and disinfect** the areas at the business where the COVID-19 positive person has been.
 - If **between 24 hours to 3 days** have passed, businesses only need to **clean** the areas where the COVID-19 positive person has been. Disinfection is not necessary.
 - If **more than 3 days have passed, no special cleaning and disinfection of the facility is necessary**. Businesses should follow their routine cleaning and disinfection protocols.
 - For detailed information about cleaning and disinfection, see the following guidances at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities*

Reporting to DC Health

- Businesses located in DC must follow DC Health guidelines for reporting cases of COVID-19.
- Refer to the DC Health guidance *Best Practices for Businesses, Community Establishments, and Public Events* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance for reporting requirements (including what information needs to be collected and provided to DC Health).
- If the cases at the business meet the criteria to be reported to DC Health, the designated POC should immediately report the cases to DC Health.
- Notify DC Health 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**.

- [DC Contact Trace Force](#) or DC Health Epidemiology Team may contact the **business** and the positive **individual**.

Instructions for Return to Work

Confirmed COVID-19 cases:

Employees with **confirmed COVID-19** must only return to work after:

- **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.
- Employees who tested positive but never had symptoms may only return after completing 10 days of self-isolation 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.

Close contacts:

- Close contacts of a person confirmed to have COVID-19 and required to quarantine may return to work after completion of their quarantine period.
 - Quarantining for 14 days after the date of their last exposure is the safest option; however staff may return after completing 10 days of self-quarantine as long as they have remained asymptomatic during their quarantine, and continue to monitor for symptoms for the duration of their 14-day incubation period.
 - For more information on reduced quarantine periods, see *Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance
 - Even if a close contact tests negative for COVID-19, they should continue to quarantine until they have met the criteria to end quarantine as described in the guidance.

NOTE: Employers should not require a negative COVID-19 test for an employee to return to work after they have completed their isolation or quarantine period.

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