



Guidance on Employees Who Were Exposed To, Experiencing Symptoms of, or Received a Positive Test Result for COVID-19

Last Updated: 3/3/2021

Guidance Overview:

This document explains how homeless service providers should respond when employees are exposed to, experiencing symptoms of, or receive a positive test result for COVID-19.

Definitions:

Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, while that person was infectious.

Infectious period: The time period during which someone is 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 don't have symptoms).

Incubation period: The time between when someone is exposed to an infectious agency and when the first symptoms may appear. The incubation period for COVID-19 can be as little as 2 day and as long as 14 days.

Fully vaccinated: An individual is considered fully vaccinated at day 14 after completion of a COVID-19 vaccination series (after the second dose of a 2-dose series, or after one dose of a single-dose vaccine).

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.

1. Who does this guidance apply to?

All DHS Homeless Service Providers

2. What should providers do if an employee has been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Employees do not need to quarantine if they are in either of the following two groups.

1. The employee has been fully vaccinated and meets the following criteria:
 - a. It has been at least 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single dose vaccine; AND
 - b. The employee is within 90 days of receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose



series, or the first and final dose of a single dose vaccine; AND

- c. The employee has remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.
2. Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days that are not showing any new symptoms of COVID-19.

Other than the two groups listed above, all employees who had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 should self-quarantine at home for fourteen (14) days from the last time the employee was exposed to the person who tested positive.

If the employee was exposed to a positive low barrier shelter resident, the employee should get tested at the mass testing event coordinated at the shelter after every confirmed positive case. If not, the employee can get tested through their healthcare provider or through free public testing sites. The employee should get tested at least three (3) to five (5) days after being exposed. Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia is available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.

If the test results are negative, the employee should continue to self-quarantine for the full fourteen (14) day period as symptoms may appear two (2) to fourteen (14) days after exposure. If the test results are positive, see question 5.

3. What should providers do if an employee demonstrates symptoms of COVID-19?

If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19 [fever, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea] the employee should ***stay at home*** and not come into work. If the employee develops symptoms while on-site, the employee should be sent home ***immediately***. The employee should be encouraged to call their primary health provider to see if COVID-19 testing is needed. Providers are encouraged to monitor closely to identify whether there are any other employees or clients exhibiting symptoms.

4. What should providers do if an employee has tested positive for COVID-19?

Once the provider is notified or becomes aware of an employee who received a positive test result for COVID-19, the provider should ***immediately*** take the following steps:

- **Confirm last known presence on site.** Make note of the days the employee who tested positive worked and where they worked. Also make note of the day the employee started showing symptoms [fever, coughing, shortness of breath].
- **Identify close contacts.** Identify clients or employees who had close contact with the employee who tested positive for COVID-19. Staff should identify individuals who had close contact with that person at any time while that person was



symptomatic and two days before the person became symptomatic or two days before their test was performed if they had no symptoms.

- **Notify DC Health of positive cases by completing this [FORM](#).** The provider should report the first and last name of the individual, the date of the positive test, and a contact number for the individual where he/she can be reached. **Please note:** Access to this information is highly restricted. This form should not be confused with the general staffing tracker, available [HERE](#), which tracks general staffing trends/needs. DC Health will facilitate the contact tracing process.
- **Implement cleaning plan.** Rooms or areas previously occupied by the staff should be cleaned following the DC Health [Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#).

5. What should providers do if they experience staffing shortages?

Providers should notify DHS as soon as possible about any anticipated staffing shortages that may impact operations by contacting:

For DHS Providers: Contact your contract or grant administrator

For TCP Providers: Contact TCP

Providers should consider re-purposing staff as needed to cover staffing shortages, such as by asking case managers to provide operations support at the shelters.

6. When is it safe for employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have experienced COVID-19 symptoms to return to work?

Any employee with confirmed COVID-19 should stay at home until

- At least ten (10) days* have passed since symptoms first started; AND
- At least twenty-four (24) hours have passed after the employee's fever resolves without medication; AND
- The employee's other symptoms have improved.

*Persons who experienced severe illness are recommended to consult with their doctors as they may have to isolate until twenty (20) days have passed since symptoms first started.

If the employee tested positive but never had any symptoms, the employee should wait until at least ten (10) days have passed since he/she was tested.

For more information please see DC Health [Guidance for Persons Who Tested Positive for COVID-19](#).

7. How can essential workers stay safe?

Please see guidance from the DC Department of Health: *Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): [Guidance for Essential \(Non-Healthcare\) Workers on How to Stay Safe in the Workplace](#)*. This



contains a list of recommendations that essential workers should follow to help protect themselves and other members of the community.

Please also see Mayor's Order 2020-063, [Extensions of Public Emergency and Public Health Emergency and Measures to Protect Vulnerable Populations During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#), issued April 15, 2020, that designates individuals who provide direct support services within congregate care settings (including shelters) as essential health care providers.

This designation allows those staff members to get access to testing if staff become symptomatic. Please see [HERE](#) for more information on how to access testing.

8. What other protective measures should providers take?

Consistent with Mayor's Order 2020-063, [Extensions of Public Emergency and Public Health Emergency and Measures to Protect Vulnerable Populations During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#), issued April 15, 2020, we ask providers to take the following protective measures (if not already underway):

- Inform all employees in writing that they should not come to work if sick and of applicable paid leave provisions;
- Inform all employees in writing of social distancing protocols;
- Separate all employee workstations by at least six (6) feet or stagger employee shift times or duties to maintain social distance;
- Stagger break times and ensure that employees maintain social distancing while taking breaks or when consuming food;
- Require all employees working on site to wear a mask or face covering at all times;
- Ensure that all employees have consistent access to running water and soap; tissues and lined trash receptacles; store-bought alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least sixty percent (60%) alcohol if permitted in the facility; and disinfectant spray or wipes;
- Implement the following practices to mitigate the risk of transmission within facilities and residences:
 - Identify a point of contact (POC) that staff can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms.
 - Direct individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to medical care and COVID-19 testing.

9. Where can I turn if I have additional questions?

For questions or additional information, please email dhs.covid19@dc.gov or visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Attachments:

- TEMPLATE – letter to exposed staff