GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND THE COMMUNITY REGARDING COVID-19 INFECTION AND EXPOSURE
Guidance for Employers and the Community Regarding COVID-19 Infection and Exposure

The purpose of the guidance is to help employers and community members determine next steps when being notified that a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to replace medical evaluation or any other recommendations by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

All information is subject to change.

Background

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infection caused by a virus that can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. While it is primarily spread by coming into close contact (about 6 feet) of a person who is infected with COVID-19, it may also be spread by touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. This includes staying home as much as possible, avoiding close contact with others, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surface and washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

EPA-approved disinfectants can be found online at https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2. Bleach solutions (for example, 1/3 cup bleach added to 1 gallon of water) and 70% alcohol solutions are also effective alternatives if the EPA-approved disinfectants are in short supply.

Anyone who is ill should stay home. Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (generally defined as 100.4 °F)
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19, but some people are at higher risk for more severe illness, including hospitalization and death. Persons who are at higher risk include those who are over 65 years of age and people with serious underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled. More details regarding people who may be at higher risk can be found online at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html.

Please contact the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health at (800) 722-4794 if you have questions regarding this guidance or other questions about COVID-19 in San Bernardino County. Visit the San Bernardino County Public Health COVID-19 website at https://sbcovid19.com for additional resources.
IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

If infected employee is at home, instruct to stay home. If infected employee is at work, send home immediately.

Thoroughly disinfect of areas where the infected employee was working.

Allow infected employee to work remotely if infected employee is well enough and is able to perform work duties from home or other off-site location.

Determine whether the infected employee has had prolonged direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with other employees or members of the community during the two days before symptoms first started.

Collect name and phone number of any individual who may have been exposed to the infected employee. Identify the last date the exposed employee may have been in close contact with the infected employee. Public Health may request information for individuals who have had prolonged direct contact to the infected employee.

Infected employee should not return to work until meeting criteria in Return to Work Guidance.

See Exposed Employee Guidance for additional information regarding exposed employees.

Based on the CDC’s Return to Work Criteria for Healthcare Personnel and Discontinuation of Home Isolation.
RETURNING TO WORK

Infected employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 may **not** return to work until they meet the CDC criteria for discontinuation of isolation.

**Symptom / Time-Based**

Determine if the patient has had symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection (regardless if before or after testing)

**No Symptoms**

- At least 10 days have passed since positive test result
  - AND

- No symptoms have developed since positive test result

**Symptoms**

- Infected employee must have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours
  - AND

- Infected employee must have improved, resolving symptoms
  - AND

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

Recovered employee may return to work. Employee should follow all recommendations by their healthcare provider and Public Health, maintain good hygiene practices and continue to self-monitor for any symptoms.

**NOTE:** Positive tests results do not necessarily mean that the Infected Employee is still infectious to others. There are reports of patients having positive tests for week and months after no longer being infectious.


Last updated August 12, 2020
IF AN EMPLOYEE’S CLOSE CONTACT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, BUT EMPLOYEE DOES NOT HAVE ONGOING EXPOSURE

Determine if the exposed employee has had prolonged direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with the infected individual in the 2 days before the positive case developed symptoms.

- **No Close Contact**
  - Exposed employee should self-monitor for symptoms and contact their healthcare provider if any symptoms develop.
  - Exposed employee may continue to work as long as exposed employee has no contact with the positive case until after the positive case is determined to not be infectious.

- **Close Contact**
  - Determine if exposed employee provides critical infrastructure essential services that cannot be provided by other staff.
  - See guidance for permitting exposed employees who provide critical essential services to continue to work.
  - Critical Infrastructure Essential Services
    - Instruct exposed employee to remain at home under quarantine until 14 days have passed since last exposure to the positive case and monitor for symptoms. Exposed employee should avoid contact with the positive case until the positive case is released from isolation (determined to not be infectious).
  - Not Critical Infrastructure Essential Services
    - Exposed employee may return to work after 14 days have passed since last exposure to the positive case.
    - Determine if exposed employee develops symptoms at any time during their quarantine period.
    - No Symptoms
      - Exposed employee continues their quarantine period. Exposed employee may return to work after 14 days have passed since the positive case was released from isolation (deemed to not be infectious) by the health department.
    - Exposed employee becomes symptomatic
      - Instruct exposed employee to contact their healthcare provider.
      - Exposed employee is not tested for COVID-19, tests negative for COVID-19 or diagnosed with an illness other than COVID-19
        - Follow guidance for employee is diagnosed with COVID-19
        - Exposed employee is diagnosed with COVID-19
          - Allow exposed employee to work remotely during their self-quarantine if able to perform work duties from home.

Based on the CDC’s Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure.

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IF AN EMPLOYEE’S FAMILY MEMBER OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, BUT EMPLOYEE HAS ONGOING EXPOSURE

Determine if the exposed employee has had prolonged direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with the infected individual in the 2 days before the positive case developed symptoms.

- **No Close Contact**
  - Exposed employee should self-monitor for symptoms and contact their healthcare provider if any symptoms develop.

- **Close Contact**
  - Determine if exposed employee provides critical infrastructure essential services that cannot be provided by other staff.
    - **Not Critical Infrastructure Essential Services**
      - Instruct exposed employee to remain at home under quarantine until 14 days after the positive case has been released from isolation (deemed not to be infectious) and monitor for symptoms. Exposed employee should attempt to maintain separation from the positive case as much as possible while in the home.
    - **Critical Infrastructure Essential Services**
      - See guidance for permitting exposed employees who provide critical essential services to continue to work.

- **Exposed employee may continue to work as long as exposed employee has no contact with the positive case until the positive case is determined to not be infectious.**

  - Exposed employee may return to work after 14 days have passed since the positive case was released from isolation (determined not to be infectious) by the health department.
  - **No Symptoms**
    - Determine if exposed employee develops symptoms at any time during their quarantine period.
      - **Exposed employee becomes symptomatic**
        - Instruct exposed employee to contact their health care provider.
      - **Exposed employee is not tested for COVID-19, tests negative for COVID-19 or diagnosed with an illness other than COVID-19**
        - Exposed employee is diagnosed with COVID-19
          - Follow guidance for employee is diagnosed with covid-19
      - **Exposed employee is diagnosed with COVID-19**
        - Allow exposed employee to work remotely during their self-quarantine if able to perform work duties from home.
  - **Exposed employee is tested for COVID-19, tests negative for COVID-19**
    - Exposed employee should continue their quarantine period. Exposed employee may return to work after 14 days have passed since the positive case was released from isolation (deemed not to be infectious) by the health department.
IF AN EXPOSED EMPLOYEE PROVIDES CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND/OR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Whenver possible, allow exposed employee to work remotely.

Whenever possible, allow highest risk exposed employee(s) to stay home. Examples may include those with prolonged or close contact to a confirmed case, those who are over 65 years of age, those with underlying medical conditions.

When working remotely or staying home is not possible, exposed employee may provide critical infrastructure essential services while adhering to the workplace monitoring programs.

Exposed employee may not work with high risk populations.

Exposed employee must immediately go home if any symptoms develop.

All employers of critical infrastructure essential services should establish and maintain a workplace monitoring program to protect all employees and the community.

Pre-Screen: employer should measure exposed employee’s temperature and assess for symptoms prior to starting work, ideally before entering facility.

Monitor: exposed employees should self-monitor for symptoms under supervision of the occupational health program.

Mask: exposed employee must wear a face mask at all times in the workplace until 14 days after last exposure to a confirmed case. Cloth face coverings may be approved at the employer’s discretion.

Social Distance: exposed employee must maintain 6 feet of distance and practice social distancing whenever work duties safely permit.

Disinfect: both employer and exposed employee must routinely clean and disinfect workspaces (offices, common areas, restrooms), high touch surfaces and shared equipment.

Based on the CDC’s Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Exposed to COVID-19. Industry-specific guidance may be available at CDC’s COVID-19 Website.
IF AN EXPOSED EMPLOYEE TESTS NEGATIVE AND DISPLAYS NO SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

A negative result does **not** eliminate the possibility of the exposed employee from developing symptoms at a later date.

Exposed employee should continue to follow their quarantine instructions, even if the test result is negative.

Follow "If an Employee’s Family Member, Household Member or Close Contact Tests Positive for COVID-19" flow chart guidance, including guidance for critical infrastructure essential services and self-monitor for symptoms.

Be aware that in some instances, a positive case will be released from isolation faster than an exposed employee will complete their quarantine. The 14-day quarantine is the period in which the patient should continue to watch for symptoms in case they have been infected.

If exposed employee develops symptoms at any time, exposed employee should be instructed to contact their healthcare provider. If the exposed employee provides critical infrastructure essential services and is at work at the time symptoms start, the exposed employee should be sent home immediately.