

Davidson County Health Department---Local Business Guide to Handling COVID-19 in the Workplace

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Every situation is different, please call the DCHD (336) 242-2300 to work through individual difficult situations. This guide is meant to assist and guidance with COVID-19 changes rapidly. (created June 19, 2020) - ALL TCS SITUATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS WILL GO THROUGH THE HR

DEPARTMENT FOR THE DISTRICT.

Scenario	Yes – HIGH RISK	No – LOW RISK	Maybe – MODERATE RISK
I have an employee who lives with someone who was told they are a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case. Does my employee need to stay out of work for 14 days?		Exclusions only apply to close contacts of known positives. Right now, the employee's household member is a known contact of a positive, not your employee. The employee should take extra precautions to stay away from their household member during their quarantine.	
I have an employee and their spouse tested positive for COVID-19. Do they need to stay out of work?	Exclusions to the workplace apply to close contacts. If your employee's spouse tested positive, your employee needs to stay out of work at least 14 days and maybe longer, depending on the length of the symptoms.		
I have an employee that tested positive for COVID-19. Do I need to tell everyone that worked with that person to go home?			Close contacts to known cases should be excluded for 14 days since last date of close contact. ANY employee at your business that was closer than 6' without a face covering for more than 15 minutes during the infectious period (48 hours prior to symptoms or test date) should be excluded. Employees that worked the same shift, but were not close to the positive employee should not be excluded.
I have an employee that tested positive. Should I send a company-wide email to let staff know?		Employee privacy is important, and protected by law. Call the local health department to discuss the situation and next steps for employee notification. Also, if you have a legal department, work with them too. This may create fear. This will go through HR (Dr. Dalton) in TCS.	

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An employee called in today, shared they tested positive for COVID-19 and they started feeling bad at work yesterday. Do we need to start sending staff home?			Call the DCHD to work through next steps. Close contacts of that employee who are at work need to go home and quarantine. Other employees that are close contacts and not at work need to be alerted to not report for duty. There are several considerations with employee privacy and close contacts, call the DCHD to work through this. Not all coworkers are necessarily close contacts.
I have an employee that tested positive. Should they stay out of work until they receive two negative test results?		CDC states 10 days post onset of symptoms (or test date if no symptoms are present) as well as three days fever free without fever reducing medication, low risk of passing the virus. Two negative tests are not recommended.	
We are doing temperature checks for all staff at the start of each shift, we exclude anyone with a temperature of 100.4F or greater. Does this mean we don't have any employees with the virus in the building?			Some individuals who have and spread COVID-19 never show any symptoms. Some never have a fever. People who do have symptoms shed (spread) the virus for up to 48 hours before the first symptoms start. Temperature checks are useful, but certainly not a failsafe. Use in conjunction with face coverings and social distancing.
I have an employee that doesn't know anyone with COVID-19, but woke up with COVID-19 like symptoms. Should they stay out of work?	Anyone with any communicable disease symptoms should stay out of work (fever, diarrhea, coughing etc.). Should these folks should stay out of work for 14 days, like COVID-19 cases? Only apply COVID-19 guidelines to known positive cases.		
Should I require all employees to be tested for COVID-19?			If you work with a high risk population, testing of employees may help to keep those you serve safe. Caution---testing is a point in time, and after the specimen is collected a negative result is no longer reliable. Call the DCHD.

Our business has an outbreak of COVID-19, many employees have tested positive. Should all employees be tested?	Some may be asymptomatic carriers, they too should be excluded to stop the spread in your facility. The only way to identify asymptomatic carriers is with a COVID-19 test. Consult the DCHD.		
Scenario	Yes – HIGH RISK	No – LOW RISK	Maybe – MODERATE RISK
I have an employee that tested positive, should our business do a press release?			If your business serves the community, a press release acknowledging you are taking precautions to stop the spread is a wise decision. Work with legal. This goes through Dr. Dalton in TCS
We have a company picnic scheduled the last Friday of every month. Should we cancel?	This type of event most likely will bring people closer than 6', limited ability to wash hands, and eating food leads to touching the face. Congregate eating events are recommended to be cancelled.		
I have an employee that attended an outdoor gathering on Sunday. The person stayed in their car, but rolled down the window and said hello to the greeter. The greeter tested positive on Tuesday. Should this employee stay home?		The exchange with the greeter is considered low risk. If the employee simply said hello to the greeter upon entry and stayed in their car, it is considered a low risk of exposure from the COVID-19 positive greeter.	
I have an employee that was told they were a close contact and should quarantine for 14 days from three days ago. They got a COVID-19 test today and it came back negative. Should they still stay out of work for 14 days, even if they have a negative test result?	A test is a point in time. The incubation period for COVID-19 is 2-14 days. If your employee received a negative COVID-19 test it doesn't mean they won't become positive. Close contacts are higher risk for developing COVID-19, but not a guarantee. The safest way to protect your business is follow 14 day quarantine guidance.		
Should we require everyone to wear a face covering? **this document was created at a time when there are no requirements from the Governor about wearing face coverings.			Face coverings are most effective with stopping infected individuals from spreading the virus. If your service delivery occurs where 6' of separation may not be maintained, you should have your staff wear a face covering.

Should we require everyone to get an antibody test?		The available tests are not recommended to determine next steps for COVID-19. This test does not predict future immunity.	
Today we got a call from someone who came to our business last week and now they are positive. Do we need to send all of our employees home?			Call the DCHD and discuss this situation. If you provide services without a face covering and 6' of separation is not maintained, this could require exclusions. Best to discuss this with the local health department staff for next steps.
Scenario	Yes – HIGH RISK	No – LOW RISK	Maybe – MODERATE RISK
I have an employee that ate at a restaurant yesterday. Today on the news we saw where that restaurant is closed because of COVID-19. Do I need to tell my employee to go home?		Contact tracing efforts will alert close contacts of known positive cases. Eating at a restaurant most likely is a low risk encounter.	
I have an employee that is waiting for results for a COVID-19 test. They feel ok now, but still don't have results. Should I tell them not to come back to work until they receive the negative results?	Anyone tested for COVID-19 should quarantine until the results are available. Many individuals show symptoms, get tested, but feel better before the results are available. These people may receive a positive diagnosis therefore possibly still contagious, and should follow isolation and/or quarantine guidelines. Call the DCHD for specific questions.		
Does the health department provide a "doctors note" so that I know my employee really did test positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact? What about coming back to work notes?			The DCHD does not provide tests, or medical care to the majority of individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Upon request by the individual, we will provide to them documentation regarding their terms for isolation (positive case), quarantine (close contact), or cleared from isolation or quarantine limits. The individual may then share these documents with their employer. These documents only relate to the terms of isolation and quarantine during infectious periods, and DO NOT signify "fit for duty" return.

<p>I had an employee call out today, they didn't say why. I wonder if it's COVID-19? We may need to do something at our workplace, can I call the health department to find out if our employee has COVID-19?</p>			<p>Individuals have a right to keep their personal health information private, for this reason we are not able to report cases upon request. HOWEVER, if an individual refuses to report to their employer and there is a great risk for spreading, the local health department may contact the employer and work through the situation in a way that does not identify the employee.</p>
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