



COVID-19 EXPOSURE IN THE WORKPLACE

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Coronaviruses are generally thought to spread from person-to-person through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person, or by touching surfaces contaminated by the bodily fluids of infected persons.

The symptoms of COVID-19 may include: Fever or chills, 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, and diarrhea.

The goals of the recommendations below are: 1) to protect people patronizing and working at the location, as well as the local community from COVID-19 infection, and 2) to reduce community transmission and introductions of COVID-19 into new communities.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Employers are responsible for ensuring employees are healthy enough to be at the facility.

- A. Screen your employees at the beginning of each shift for possible COVID-19 symptoms.
 1. Ask if they are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above.
 2. You may also want to consider checking each employee's temperature when they arrive onsite.
 3. A temperature above 100.4 degrees F is considered a fever.
- B. If an employee shows any of these symptoms, exclude them from your facility and encourage them to go home and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 "What To Do If You Are Sick" guidelines found [here](#).
- C. Employees who are living with someone who has tested positive should also follow these guidelines.

WHAT IF MY EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

Upon notification that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 or exhibits symptoms directly associated with COVID-19¹, the facility owner/manager shall take the following actions:

- A. Exclude the employee from the facility and encourage the employee to adhere to the [Health Officer Order \(HOO\) Appendix B-1](#) for the control of COVID-19.
- B. Discard or disinfect any items handled by the ill employee in the last 48 hours, including but not limited to, food, utensils, office supplies, tools, and merchandise.
- C. Disinfect your work area immediately using the [CDC's disinfection guidance](#).

¹ Symptoms directly associated with COVID-19 include fever, 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 and diarrhea.



- D. Any known close contacts of the ill employee should also be excluded from the facility for at least 14 days since their last contact with the ill employee. A close contact is defined as being within six feet of the ill employee for 15 minutes or longer.
- E. Inform all employees of the day(s) of their possible exposure to COVID-19 at the facility, but do **not** disclose the identity of the ill employee. This is private health information.
- F. Encourage employees to monitor themselves more closely for potential symptoms and seek free testing if desired by contacting their primary care physician, or through [Project Baseline](#).
- G. Facility owner/manager should monitor employees more closely for potential symptoms for at least 14 days since the ill employee last worked at that location.

IF THE SICK EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN AT THE FACILITY IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS

- A. Immediately cease operation and clean and sanitize the facility according to [CDC's disinfection guidance](#).
- B. Cleaning and sanitizing may be conducted by any individual trained on the proper use of the cleaners/sanitizer, including facility owners, employees, or outside contractors.

Your facility can resume operation once it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, and is in full compliance with all San Mateo County Health Officer Orders, [Statewide Industry Specific Guidance](#), and all CDC COVID-19 Guidance/Requirements.

If the affected individual has not been at the facility in the past seven days, operations may continue uninterrupted. Additional cleaning and sanitizing are not necessary.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF COVID-19 OUTBREAKS IN THE WORKPLACE

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) now requires employers to **immediately** notify local health departments of any COVID-19 outbreaks at their workplace.

An outbreak is currently defined as three or more lab confirmed COVID-19 cases at a single business within 14 days.

All COVID-19 outbreaks at San Mateo County businesses can be reported by submitting the [COVID-19 CMR Form](#) via email to SMCCDControl@smcgov.org or if you prefer to report outbreaks by phone, please call (650) 573-2346.

WHEN CAN AN EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK?

The CDC has provided guidance for the following frequently encountered COVID-19 exposure scenarios in the workplace.



A. If an employee had COVID-19 and experienced symptoms.

An employee may be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

Testing is not required to return to work unless recommended by a healthcare provider.

B. If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 but experienced no symptoms.

An employee may be around others after:

- 10 days have passed since the COVID-19 positive test

Testing is not required to return to work unless recommended by a healthcare provider.

C. If an employee was exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, but experienced no symptoms and did not test positive for COVID-19.

An employee may be around others after:

- 14 days have passed since the last close contact with a confirmed case

D. If an employee was exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, experienced symptoms, but did not test positive for COVID-19.

Follow the guidance above, as if the employee did test positive for COVID-19.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For CDC guidance and updates, on COVID-19 exposure and return to work information, visit the following link: [CDC Guidance Information on Returning to Work](#).

For California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance and updates, on responding to COVID-19 exposure in the workplace, visit the following link: [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).

For additional guidance to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace, visit Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Guidance on Returning to Work](#).