

**For Non-Healthcare Businesses & Community Organizations:  
What to do if Someone at the Workplace Has COVID-19**

Updated August 17, 2020

*This document was updated from 5/17/2020 with the addition of Frequently Asked Questions, addition of new resources, and new definition of “close contacts.”*

This document is available at [www.sfgdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfgdcp.org/covid19) under *Businesses and Employers*.

**AUDIENCE:** Businesses, companies, offices, faith-based and similar organizations. (Healthcare personnel and first responders should instead check with their occupational safety office for guidance, and see specific info posted at [www.sfgdcp.org/covid19hcp](http://www.sfgdcp.org/covid19hcp) under *Health Care Exposures*).

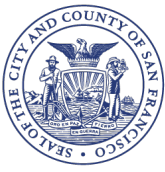
**APPLIES WHEN:** One or more persons from the organization have COVID-19 (i.e. they either tested positive for COVID-19 **or** their healthcare provider diagnosed them with COVID-19) **and** they developed symptoms within 48 hours of being at work.

If someone with confirmed COVID-19 was not at the workplace in the 48 hours preceding the onset of symptoms or while they had symptoms, these instructions do not apply and there are no special recommendations for quarantine or disinfection.

Symptoms of COVID-19 illness include fever, chills, or repeated shaking/shivering, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, feeling unusually weak or fatigued, loss of taste or smell, muscle pain, headache, runny or congested nose, or diarrhea.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- **Maintain confidentiality.** Ask the ill person who in the workplace they had close contact with in the 48 hours prior to developing symptoms. Do not disclose the ill person’s identity to anyone at the workplace. To the extent possible, use only readily available information to identify who had close contact with the ill person. Do not disclose the identity of the ill person in your effort to identify close contacts.
- Determine (a) the last day that the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was present at the workplace and (b) the day their symptoms began.
- If 3 or more employees test positive in a 2-week period, call the Department of Public Health at 415-554-2830.
- **Close contact** is defined as staying within 6 feet of the person diagnosed with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes after they were diagnosed or up to two days before they had symptoms, or having direct contact with their body fluids or secretions while they were not wearing a facemask, gown,

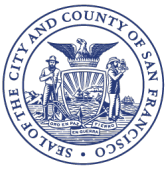


and gloves. Close contact also includes people who live with, take care of, or are taken care of by the person with COVID-19.

- Anyone who had **close contact** with the person diagnosed with COVID-19 within 48 hours before they developed symptoms or while they were having symptoms should be excluded from the workplace and **stay at home for 14 days** since the last day that the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was at work. This is “quarantine.” If during the quarantine, the employee develops COVID-19, they would transition to “isolation.”
  - Provide the **Home Isolation & Quarantine Guidelines** to persons identified as Close Contacts. Instructions and FAQs are available at: [www.sfgdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfgdcp.org/covid19) under “Isolation & Quarantine Directives.” They should follow the **Home Quarantine Steps**.
- **All others present at the workplace** but not identified as close contacts should be advised to **self-monitor for symptoms** for 14 days after the last day that the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was at work and to stay home and contact a health care provider if they develop symptoms.
  - Provide the **General Exposure Advisory** to all those not identified as Close Contacts, available at [www.sfgdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfgdcp.org/covid19) under *Businesses and Employers*.
- Undertake **cleaning and disinfection measures**. See CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfection measures, including measures for cleaning and disinfection if someone is sick, posted at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html)
  - Also see our instructions for Cleaning and Disinfectant Safety & Approved Disinfectants posted at [www.sfgdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfgdcp.org/covid19) under *Cleaning Recommendations*
- Actively message all individuals to **increase hygiene measures** (hand washing, avoiding contact with eyes/nose/mouth, covering coughs and sneezes). Provide tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes that can be easily accessed throughout the facility. Printable materials are available at: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html)
- Structure the work environment to follow **social distancing** guidelines. For example, encourage telecommuting as much as possible based on business functions. Those who remain in the workplace should keep at least a 6-foot distance from other individuals. Additional information on workplaces and social distancing is available at: <https://sf.gov/topics/coronavirus-covid-19>

**Key Points Employers Need to Know about their Employee Who is Positive for COVID-19**

- Maintain confidentiality. Do not make the sick person’s identity known to anyone at your workplace.
- San Francisco Department of Public Health recommends that employers do not ask for a note or a retest after an employee completes isolation or quarantine.
- Assure your employees that an employer is not allowed to fire, discipline or reduce their hours for staying home if they test positive, are asked to quarantine or self-isolate for COVID-19.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1) Should I ask for a doctor's note or proof of a COVID-19 test from my employee?**

- The San Francisco Department of Public Health has encouraged employers not to require a note for employees to stay home from work or return to work. This information can be found on our website at: [www.sfcddp.org/covid19](http://www.sfcddp.org/covid19) under "Home Isolation and Returning to Work".

### **2) Should I contact the Department of Public Health if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19?**

- You only have to contact the Department of Public Health if 3 or more employees test positive in a 2-week period. They can be reached at 415-554-2830.

### **3) Will I be informed if an employee tests positive for COVID-19?**

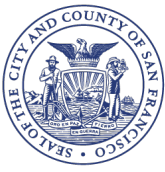
- You will be informed by the Department of Public Health if your employee identifies your workplace as the likely place of exposure or if your employee has had close contact with co-workers within 48 hours before developing symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19. If your employee contracted the virus away from work did not come into close contact with co-workers, your employee should notify you of their need to self-isolate.

### **3) When can an employee who tests positive for COVID-19 return to work?**

- The employee does not need to get tested to return to work.
- There are various situations when an employee can return to work. Please look at [Interim Guidance: Leaving Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19](#) at [www.sfcddp.org/rtw](http://www.sfcddp.org/rtw).

### **4) I am concerned about the layout of the workspace, what should I keep in mind for social distancing?**

- If it makes sense for your business, explore having staff telecommute.
- For those still in the workspace remind staff to stay 6 feet apart. You can put tape on the floor if it can help with the flow of traffic in your building.
- Think about reducing occupancy in your restroom(s).
- Appendix A of Health Officer Order C19-07e is an excellent resource for businesses. To get ideas about your workspace, take a look at the Measures to Prevent Unnecessary Contact section in Appendix A, located at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07e-Appendix-A.pdf](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07e-Appendix-A.pdf).



**5) What is contact tracing?**

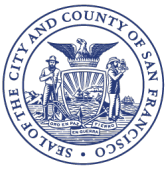
- Contact tracing is a program that helps determine who may have been in contact with the infected employee, including when that person has no symptoms.
- You or some of the staff may be contacted by the San Francisco Department of Public Health who will guide you through the next steps. They will want you or your staff to provide your name, phone number, and where you live.
- SFDPH will want to know the close contacts of the employee who tested positive for COVID-19. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes of the person with COVID-19. More information about close contacts can be found at <https://sf.gov/business-guidance-if-staff-member-tests-positive-covid-19>.

**6) Can I ask my employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 to come to work before they complete their isolation?**

- No. The current Shelter in Place Order at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp) reminds businesses that they are not to let the employee come to work if they have tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Please inform your employees that they may be entitled to paid sick leave or other job protections under federal and local law if they test positive, are asked to quarantine or self-isolate for COVID-19.
- Additionally, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing Employment FAQ on COVID-19 has a factsheet at [www.dfeh.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/03/DFEH-Employment-Information-on-COVID-19-FAQ\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/03/DFEH-Employment-Information-on-COVID-19-FAQ_ENG.pdf), which contains information about state laws that prohibit discrimination against employees on the basis of their COVID-19 positive status.
- To read more about discrimination in the work place, visit the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's page for employers at [www.eeoc.gov/employers](http://www.eeoc.gov/employers).
- Please alert your employee to the [Frequently Asked Questions for Workers Who Must Isolate or Quarantine Due to COVID-19](#) resource located at [www.sfcddp.org/covid19](http://www.sfcddp.org/covid19) under "Isolation and Quarantine."

**7) If I still have questions, what other resources do I have access to?**

- San Francisco Department of Public Health has set up an email at [workplacesites@sfdph.org](mailto:workplacesites@sfdph.org) and a phone at 628-217-6381 that are aimed to support businesses.



### Additional Resources

- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH)
  - Appendix A of Health Order C19-07e  
[www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07e-Appendix-A.pdf](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07e-Appendix-A.pdf)
  - COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfectant Safety & Approved Disinfectants  
[www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19-Disinfectants-Safety-FINAL-04.18.2020.pdf](http://www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19-Disinfectants-Safety-FINAL-04.18.2020.pdf)
  - Interim Guidance: Leaving Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19  
[www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19-Return-to-Work-Leaving-Isolation-FINAL-06.08.2020.pdf](http://www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19-Return-to-Work-Leaving-Isolation-FINAL-06.08.2020.pdf)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions for Workers Who Must Isolate or Quarantine Due to COVID-19](#) (posted at [www.sfdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfdcp.org/covid19) under “Isolation and Quarantine”)
  - Shelter in Place Order  
[www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp)
  - Under the Businesses and employers tab: For Non-Healthcare Businesses & Community Organizations: What to do if Someone at the Workplace Has COVID-19  
[www.sfdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfdcp.org/covid19)
- SF.gov
  - Business guidance if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19  
<https://sf.gov/business-guidance-if-staff-member-tests-positive-covid-19>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Printable signs and fliers for the workplace  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html).
  - Cleaning and Disinfection.  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fdisinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fdisinfecting-building-facility.html)
- California Labor & Workforce Development Agency
  - Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Resources for Employers and Workers  
[www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/](http://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/)
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
  - Page for employers  
[www.eeoc.gov/employers](http://www.eeoc.gov/employers)