

Workplace COVID-19 Response

Receiving Notice of a Positive Case in the Workplace

We know that receiving a report of a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace can be stressful. It can be especially challenging if you receive this information on an evening, weekend or non-working holiday, when the Health District's COVID response team has extremely limited capacity or is not available.

Stay calm! There are some easy steps that you can take on your own to start the response process and keep your facility safe.

Step 1: Determine if the Case was at Work While Contagious

When someone becomes sick with COVID, we consider them contagious for the TWO DAYS prior to when their symptoms started, and through the 10 days they are expected to isolate at home.

If someone tested positive for COVID but never had any symptoms, we consider them contagious for the TWO DAYS prior to the date of their test, and through the 10 days they are expected to isolate at home.

For example: *If an employee started to have symptoms on Thursday (or never had symptoms, but tested positive on Thursday), we would consider them to have been contagious Tuesday, Wednesday (and Thursday). If they were not in the workplace during the two days previous to their symptom onset or on any of the following 10 days, then no exposures occurred in the workplace. If they were at work during this contagious period, then you will need to determine who was exposed (also called a "close contact").*

Step 2: Determine Who is a Close Contact

A close contact is anyone who was around a COVID-positive case:

1. During their contagious period (as described above), and
2. Within 6 feet of that person for more than 15 minutes of cumulative time (regardless of if they were wearing a face covering). Consider if employees carpool or eat lunch together, or frequently share equipment

If someone meets all of these conditions (time period, distance and duration), then we consider them a close contact.

When you have determined who is a close contact, collect that information and complete the "Line List Template" at www.snohd.org/COVIDbusiness. (Direct download of line list document [here](#).)

Step 3: Call Close Contacts

Call the close contacts you have identified and let them know of a possible exposure. Ask them to stay home and not come to work. Inform them that Snohomish Health District may contact them with further details on quarantining and testing. The Employer Response Team will help in determining when it is safe for close contacts to return to work.

Note: If a close contact is an essential worker (such as a healthcare worker, first responder, or food supply chain worker) and is not symptomatic, they may return to work IF they screen for fever and symptoms before work, consistently and properly wear a mask or face cover, do not develop any symptoms (no matter how mild) and do not test positive. If possible, essential employees still should quarantine if they are a close contact. Close contacts should pursue testing, ideally 5-7 days after exposure and no sooner than 2 days after exposure. Essential workers who are close contacts still need to quarantine outside of work hours, meaning they remain home aside from work and medical appointments.

When you are calling employees, it is important that you protect the medical privacy of your case and not disclose details that would identify them. To share this information would be a HIPPA violation.

This is a helpful resource for close contacts: <https://www.snohd.org/502/What-to-do-if-you-were-exposed>

Step 4: Notify Snohomish Health District

Leave a message for The Snohomish Health District COVID Response Team for Employers that you have had a potential exposure at your facility.

- 425-339-5278 (Health District COVID call center)

DO NOT send your Close Contact Line List to us via email. Email is not a HIPPA-compliant method for sharing this information.

Our team will contact you in 24-48 hours to confirm case details, quarantine timelines, make additional recommendations, advise on cleaning and sanitizing, answer your questions and share instructions on how to securely get us your Close Contact Line List.

Our team will follow-up with all of the close contacts you identify to make sure they have all the instructions and resources they need.