Positive Cases in the Workplace: How employers can help limit the spread of COVID

Employers can prepare and respond to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 by taking the following actions:

1. **Refer to the link below for guidance from the California Department of Public Health**
   
   https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Workplace-Outbreak-Employer-Guidance.aspx#

2. **Determine cleaning or disinfection that may be needed.** Refer to the link below for guidance to help you determine appropriate actions:
   

3. **Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and meet “close contact” criteria.**
   - Review CDC definition of a “close contact” or **“6-15-48”**
   - Persons who are within 6 feet of an infected person, for at least 15 minutes, starting from 48 hours before and 10 days after symptoms of the illness
   - For persons who test positive, but have no symptoms, this period is 2 days prior to testing date plus 10 days. [CDC Definition of Close Contact](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html)
   - CDC defines any non-healthcare personnel who meets the **6-15-48** definition as a close contact, even if cloth face coverings or respiratory personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn. [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html)

4. **Create a list of all employees that have positive tests or are close contacts**
   - List employee name, date of birth, phone number, dates the employee worked with the positive staff, dates of symptoms, county of residence, shift hours, and job assignment.
   - The list identifies employees who are close contacts and should quarantine for 14 days.
   - The list will assist the Public Health Department in the disease investigation.

5. **Inform the health department** by phone if there are 3 or more positive cases or employees with symptoms in your workplace: (805)681-5280. **Assure that positive employees isolate** at home and do not report to work. Information sheets found here provide more information in [English](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Workplace-Outbreak-Employer-Guidance.aspx) and [Spanish](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Workplace-Outbreak-Employer-Guidance.aspx).
6. **Inform employees of their possible exposure** to COVID-19 in the workplace

☐ Employers must maintain confidentiality of employees with suspected or confirm COVID-19 infection when communication with other employees as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Follow the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](https://publichealthsbc.org/) and instruct the potentially exposed close contacts to:

- Stay home for 14 days after their last contact with the COVID-positive employee.
- Maintain at least 6-foot distance from others in the home, telework if possible, and self-monitor for symptoms. Additional information can be found here: [https://publichealthsbc.org/](https://publichealthsbc.org/)
- If symptomatic close contacts should be tested for COVID-19 when possible, but will still need to quarantine for 14 days even if the test is negative.
- Contacts who develop symptoms should promptly notify their medical provider. They should be evaluated for infection and for the need for medical care.
  - Provide employees with information about what to expect after they are sent home (e.g., instructions about testing, sick leave rights under federal, state, and local laws and company policies, return-to-work requirements, etc.).

7. **If you are a critical infrastructure industry and have a workforce shortage consult with the Public Health Department.**

☐ The health department may consider allowing an employee in a critical infrastructure industry who had close contact to a confirmed case to continue to work if the essential operations of the workplace would be compromised by quarantine of the employee and no alternate staff can perform the same role.

☐ **Critical infrastructure** workplaces should consult with the health department before allowing close contacts to continue work activities, and follow the guidance on [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](https://publichealthsbc.org/).

☐ Employers in critical infrastructure have an obligation to manage potentially exposed workers’ return to work in ways that best protect the health of those workers, their co-workers, and the general public.