

## Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure/Essential Worker Suspected or Confirmed Exposure to COVID-19

### Background

COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces.

### Requirements

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

As defined by the CDC, the critical infrastructure/essential worker sectors are:

- Federal, state, & local law enforcement
- 911 call center employees
- Fusion Center employees
- Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector
- Janitorial staff and other custodial staff
- Workers – including contracted vendors – in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities

A potential exposure means a household contact or having close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) of another individual who is confirmed or suspected to be COVID-19 positive. This would include the 48 hours before the suspected or confirmed individual became symptomatic. More information on when to quarantine can be found on the [CDC website](#).

If the potential exposure is a household contact, the employee should self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.

Critical Infrastructure workers who have had an exposure outside of a household contact and remain asymptomatic may be permitted to continue working and must follow the practices listed below **prior to and during their work shift**:

- **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms before starting work. The best practice is to perform a temperature check before the employee enters the facility or begins their work shift. Employees with a fever of 100.4°F or greater should be sent home. If onsite temperature screening is not feasible, an acceptable alternative is for employers to require employees to self-screen for symptoms, including fever. Prior to each shift, employers should ask employees to attest that they 1) are not exhibiting any symptoms of illness; 2) do not have a fever of 100.4°F or greater; and 3) have not had recent contact with someone who is suspected or known to be infected with COVID-19.

- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should continue to self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Face Covering:** The employee should wear a [face covering](#) at all times while in the workplace. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Clean and Disinfect Work Spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others at the facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time are considered to be exposed.

- Do not allow workers with new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 to return until:
  - In the case of an employee who was symptomatic with mild to moderate illness and thinks or knows they had COVID-19, they must isolate at home. The employee may return to work when **all three** of the following criteria are met:
    1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **and**
    2. At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medications, **and**
    3. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved.
  - In the case of a worker who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return until they have completed the same three step criteria listed above; if the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
- Businesses may use their discretion and close voluntarily when a potential exposure to COVID-19 has been identified in the workplace.
- Business closure may be mandated by Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) on a case by case basis when a workplace outbreak has been identified. An outbreak is defined as three or more confirmed COVID-19 positive cases.

### Additional Considerations

- ✓ Employees should not share headsets or other objects that would be located near the mouth or nose.
- ✓ Employers should increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.
- ✓ Employers should work with facility maintenance staff to increase air exchanges in rooms.
- ✓ Employees should physically distance when they take breaks together. Stagger breaks and avoid congregation in the break room. Do not share food or utensils.

Employers should implement a plan to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. CDC has published recommendations which can be found in the [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#). Additional information about identifying critical infrastructure during COVID-19 can be found on the [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Critical Infrastructure Sector website](#) or the CDC's specific [First Responder Guidance page](#).

## **Resources**

[CDC Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) Webpage](#)

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[EPA Approved Disinfectants](#)

[Sacramento County COVID-19 updates](#)

Document was prepared by Sacramento County's [Environmental Management Department](#)

### **Summary of Revisions**

**7/15/2020:** Initial version

**8/11/2020:** Clarified employee may be permitted to continue working and must follow the practices listed in the guidance.

Revised 8/11/2020  
PHO: 7/14/2020