Response Guidelines for Food Facilities with a COVID-19 Positive or Symptomatic Employee

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.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) advises that critical infrastructure workers (including workers in food facilities) 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.

Requirements for workers

Several different situations are listed below. Scroll down to find the situation that applies to your facility. If you have further questions, please contact Sacramento County Environmental Management Department at (916) 875-8440.

Situation #1 - Worker has potentially been exposed to COVID-19 (no symptoms)

A potential exposure means having close contact with another individual who is confirmed or suspected to be COVID-19 positive. Close contact, as defined by CDC, is within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period starting two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection). More information on when to quarantine can be found on the CDC website.

Critical Infrastructure workers who have had an exposure, remain asymptomatic, and have not tested positive may be permitted to integrate back into onsite operations but should be used as a last resort and only in limited circumstances, such as when stopping the operation of a facility may cause serious harm or danger to public health or safety. Those critical infrastructure workers must follow the practices listed below **prior to and during their work shift:**

➢ **Pre-Screen:** Employees should pre-screen at home prior to coming to work. The employee should not come into work if experiencing symptoms, has a temperature equal to or higher than 100.4°F or is waiting for the results of a viral test.

➢ **Screen at the workplace:** Employers should conduct an on-site symptom assessment, including temperature screening, prior to each work shift. Ideally, screening should happen before the individual enters the facility.

➢ **Regular Monitoring:** Worker should continue to self-monitor for temperature and symptoms. If temperature increases over 100.4F or symptoms appear, employer should be notified immediately.

- ➢ **Wear a Face Covering:** Ensure all employees wear a cloth mask in accordance with CDC and OSHA guidance.
- ➢ **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, including offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment etc.

Situation #2 - Worker becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms or Worker reports a positive COVID-19 test result and has symptoms*

If a worker becomes sick or gets a positive COVID-19 test result during the shift, 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.

Close contact, as defined by CDC, is within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period starting two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection). More information on when to quarantine can be found on the CDC website.

Workers diagnosed with COVID-19, or having symptoms of COVID-19 should not return to work until **all three** of the following criteria are met:

1. At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications, **and**
2. The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.), **and**
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

*If worker 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 a worker 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.

Situation #3 - Worker reports a positive COVID-19 test result and has no symptoms

Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 but have not had any symptoms have the following option for discontinuing isolation and returning to work. If symptoms develop, see the list below.

NO symptoms develop

- ➢ Workers may return to work after 10 days have passed from the date of the positive COVID-19 diagnostic test if they have not subsequently developed symptoms. If symptoms develop, workers must self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider. Immunocompromised individuals should quarantine for 14 days as per existing recommendations.

If symptoms develop while waiting for 10 days or test results

If symptoms develop, workers should not return to work until **all three** of the following criteria are met:

1. At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications, **and**
2. The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.), **and**
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Note: Because symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness, it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.

Note: Because of the absence of symptoms, it is not possible to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness. It has been reported that some individuals continue to test positive for detection of COVID-19 RNA for several weeks or months without evidence that they continue to be contagious during that time period.

The decision for workers to discontinue isolation and return to work should be made in consultation with their healthcare provider.

Situation #4 – Three or more workers have symptoms and/or COVID-19 positive test results

Immediately notify Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) at (916) 875-5881 if there is a known or suspected outbreak in the workplace. A workplace outbreak is defined as three or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a two week period.

Instruct workers to stay home if they are having symptoms of COVID-19, were diagnosed with COVID-19, or are awaiting test results for COVID-19.

➢ Businesses may use their discretion and close voluntarily when a potential exposure to COVID-19 has been identified in the workplace.

➢ The business may be ordered to close by SCPH on a case by case basis when a workplace outbreak has been identified.

➢ Workplaces with an identified outbreak must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to reopening.

➢ Workplaces should thoroughly clean and disinfect the premises after a potential exposure to COVID-19 has been identified.

Situation #5 – Vaccinated worker with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are **NOT** required to quarantine if they meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

1. Are fully vaccinated (i.e., $\geq$2 weeks have passed following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or $\geq$2 weeks have passed following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine).
2. Are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series
3. Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

Persons who do don't meet all 3 of the above criteria should continue to follow current [CDC quarantine guidance](#) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Please refer to the guidance for [Implementing Safety Practices for Workplace Outbreak of COVID-19](#).

Requirements for the Workplace

Should the business close?

➢ Businesses may use their discretion and close voluntarily when a potential exposure to COVID-19 has been identified in the workplace.

➢ Sacramento County Public Health may require a business to close when an outbreak has been identified. An outbreak is defined as three or more confirmed COVID-19 positive cases. Outbreaks will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Cleaning protocols:

➢ Increase air circulation in the area, following applicable guidelines for food-service establishments.

➢ Use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning and disinfecting.

➢ Clean and disinfect all areas used by the infected person (for example, work stations, offices, bathrooms and other common areas).

➢ Clean and disinfect shared electronic equipment (for example, touch screen, keyboard and mouse, remote control) and other shared equipment.

➢ If more than 7 days have passed since the sick person visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

➢ Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Notification of Employees:

➢ Employers should notify all employees who were potentially exposed to the individual(s) with COVID-19. Confidentiality of employees with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection must be maintained when communicating with other employees.

➢ Give instructions on how to home quarantine, monitor for symptoms and where/how to access COVID-19 testing.

➢ Provide employees with information about what to expect after they are sent home (e.g. sick leave rights under federal, state, and local laws and company policies, return-to-work requirements, etc.).

➢ Employers shall take measures to reduce transmission in the workplace, including appropriate infection control and physical distancing measures.

   o Modifying work process to maximize physical distancing between employees.
   o Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of work areas.
   o Supporting respiratory and hand hygiene for employees.
   o Screening employees for illness, through symptoms screening and/or temperature checks, periodic testing or SARS-CoV-2, or request employees to self-check temperature and symptoms and self-attest when reporting to work.

- o Providing employees with adequate sick leave to allow them to stay home from work if symptomatic.
- ➢ Provide notification to Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) when an employee is COVID-19 positive. Use the SCPH Employer Reporting Form for COVID Positive Employees.

Food:

- ➢ It is not necessary to recall or destroy food products that the worker may have handled.

Guidance for disinfecting the workplace after having a worker who tests positive or is ill with COVID-19 is available on the CDC website.

Additional Considerations

- ➢ Workers 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 room.
- ➢ Workers should physically distance when they take breaks together. Stagger breaks and avoid congregation in the break room. Do not share food or utensils.
- ➢ Be aware that testing reflects an employee's status at a single point in time only. If an employee tests negative, they may still develop COVID-19 infection from a recent or subsequent exposure and should be instructed to quarantine at home if that occurs. Testing may be needed at repeated intervals to capture all positive cases, especially if an outbreak is ongoing.

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 COVID-19.

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
Employer Playbook for a Reopening
Implementing Safety Practices for Workplace Outbreak of COVID-19

Summary of Revisions

8/12/2020: Initial version
10/22/2020: Removed requirement for 14 days self-quarantine when exposure is from a household contact. Added requirement to wear a face covering for 14 days after exposure. Updated definition of a close contact per CDC.
12/14/2020: Added clarification that exposed critical infrastructure workers not experiencing symptoms and not tested positive should be allowed back at work as a last resort and only in limited circumstances. Updated requirement for these workers per guidance from CDC. Added information for employees to respond to a possible outbreak in the workplace.
1/4/2021: Added workers should quarantine for 14 days if symptoms develop.
2/23/2021: Added quarantine guidance for fully vaccinated individuals.

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