MERCER

contact tracing workflow for employers

for informational purposes only – this is not medical advice

Employee has symptoms[1] suggestive of COVID-19

Start here:

Symptomatic employee should be advised to self-isolate at home and pursue testing for COVID-19

Symptomatic employee should be interviewed by phone ASAP by designated contact tracers to identify any **close contacts**[2] in the workplace

Symptomatic employee test results for COVID-19

POSITIVE

Reach out to local public health for support and guidance

NEGATIVE

You may consider bringing employee and close contacts back to work, or retest sick employee if symptoms strongly suggestive of COVID-19, noting limitations of diagnostic testing (potential for false negative results).

All close contacts are advised to self-quarantine at home for 14 days from last day of exposure, avoid those at higher risk in their household, and monitor their health for symptoms and fever (check twice a day).

Employee(s) in quarantine develops symptoms?

NO

After 14 day quarantine, resume general precautions and social distancing.

YES

Sick employee(s) remains at home in self-isolation until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, absence of fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and symptoms have improved. Employees should contact employer to receive guidance before returning. Once cleared, continue general precautions and social distancing. Note that these recommendations may change as we continue to learn more about this virus.

Those determined to have had close contact to symptomatic employee should be notified ASAP that they have been exposed to someone who may have COVID-19, and advised to go home to self-quarantine, avoid those at **higher risk**[3] in their household, and monitor their health for symptoms and fever (check twice a day). Advise that the individual is undergoing testing and more information will follow.

Asymptomatic employees in quarantine should be tested for COVID-19, ideally 5-8 days after exposure to limit false negative results. If positive, this individual's close contacts at work should be notified, but negative test results should not typically influence the quarantine period of 14 days if they remain asymptomatic.

Important things to remember

- High-density workplace situations may warrant more aggressive identification of close contacts and testing strategies.
- Maintain confidentiality and don't share sick employee's name or other identifying information.
- Maintain any medical information collected as a medical record (i.e. not in "HR files").
- Consult legal counsel regarding your policies and procedures, and maintain compliance with all regulatory requirements (ADA, FLSA, EEOC, OSHA etc).

1

Common symptoms of COVID-19:

The following symptoms appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste/smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion/runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2

Close contact definition:

Within approximately 6 feet from someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for prolonged period of time (generally considered 15 minutes or more) **OR** having direct contact with infectious secretions of someone with COVID-19 by being coughed on, sharing utensils, kissing etc.

Exposure period is defined as 48 hours before symptom onset to time of interview.

3

Higher risk groups include:

- Older age (risk increases with age)
- People with chronic medical conditions like chronic kidney disease, lung disease (COPD), obesity (BMI of 30 or higher), serious heart conditions, sickle cell disease, and type 2 diabetes are at increased risk.
- People with moderate to severe asthma, cerebrovascular disease, cystic fibrosis, hypertension, immunocompromise, neurologic conditions (such as dementia), liver disease, pregnancy, pulmonary fibrosis, smoking, blood disorders (thalassemia), and type 1 diabetes may be at higher risk.

Resources Used: CDC – https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html; Kucirka LM, Lauer SA, Laeyendecker O, Boon D, Lessler J. Variation in False-Negative Rate of Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction-Based SARS-CoV-2 Tests by Time Since Exposure. Ann Intern Med. 2020