



INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 SCENARIOS IN BUSINESSES

DHEC is providing this generalized guidance for use by employers and employees to determine the best practices to utilize in various scenarios involving COVID-19 in the workplace.

Scenario	Actions to Take
<p>POSITIVE</p> <p>Employee tests positive for COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell employee to stay home and recommend they contact their healthcare provider, if they have not already done so. • Contact HR, Employee Relations, or supervisor to begin the process of gathering necessary information, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Date of onset of symptoms (if applicable) ○ Date and location where test specimen (swab) was collected ○ Date test results were received ○ Instructions provided by healthcare provider when test results were communicated ○ Whether the employee came in close contact¹ with any other employees or visitors from 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms (or specimen collection if they never have had symptoms) until they were sent home • Employee should remain out of work until they have recovered and met the criteria to return to work.² • Perform coworker exposure assessment and notify coworkers of close contact status or potential exposure and provide guidance as indicated.³ Maintain confidentiality when providing notifications. • The area where the infected employee worked should be cleaned and disinfected if the employee was there while contagious (from 48 hours prior to symptom onset, or specimen collection if never symptomatic, to at least ten days after symptom onset or specimen collection). If possible, the area should be isolated for 24 hours prior to cleaning and disinfection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the business is not affiliated with the healthcare industry, they are not required to hire a specialized company for cleaning and disinfection. ○ See CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for additional information.

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<p>SICK BUT NO TEST</p> <p>Employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (either calls out sick or is at work when they begin experiencing symptoms)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee should be sent home and encouraged to get tested for COVID-19. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the employee tests positive, follow the steps listed in the “Employee tests positive for COVID-19” scenario above. ○ If the employee tests negative, they may return to work when symptoms have improved. ○ If the employee does not get tested, they should be told to remain out of work until they have recovered and met criteria for release from isolation² as if they had tested positive. • No further action is needed unless the employee tests positive, then follow guidance for “Employee tests positive for COVID-19” above.
<p>CLOSE CONTACT OF A CASE</p> <p>Employee has been in close contact¹ with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send employee home. • The employee should self-quarantine and is encouraged to be tested immediately and 5-7 days from exposure if they have no symptoms. The standard quarantine period is 14-days, but employers may choose to utilize two options to shorten that time period. Testing negative on days 5-7 can shorten the quarantine period to 7 days. If no testing is completed the employee should self-quarantine for 10 days from the exposure. To end quarantine at 7 or 10 days, the employee must have no symptoms of COVID-19. The employee must continue to monitor for symptoms and adhere to mitigation strategies through day 14 if quarantine is shortened. If symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate, contact their healthcare provider, and seek re-testing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the employee lives with the person who tested positive and cannot stay separate from them during the quarantine period, they must quarantine at home throughout that person’s period of isolation (usually 10 days after their symptoms started or they were tested). They must begin counting the 14-day quarantine at the point that positive person’s isolation period ends or may apply the criteria to shorten starting from that date. ○ If the employee was in close contact with someone with whom they do not live or someone who they live with but are able to effectively separate from and avoid any further close contact, they must begin their quarantine period beginning the date of last contact with the positive person.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employees in some setting (such as employees in long term care facilities) may be restricted in which quarantine period may be used. ○ If they are released to return to work sooner than the appropriate quarantine period, they should contact HR Director or supervisor.
<p>CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE SICK (NO TEST)</p> <p>Employee has been in close contact¹ with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employee may remain at work as long as they do not have symptoms while the ill person is tested and waiting on results. ○ If the ill person tests positive for COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Send employee home and follow the guidance in the section above.
<p>CONTACT OF A CONTACT</p> <p>Employee lives with someone who has been in close contact¹ with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The employee is considered a “contact of a contact.” ○ Employee may remain at work as long as they do not have symptoms. They do <u>not</u> need to be tested unless they develop symptoms. ○ Nothing further needs to be done unless the person with whom the employee lives or was a close contact develops symptoms or tests positive. ○ If the person they live with or had close contact with develops symptoms, send the employee home until it can be determined whether the symptoms are due to COVID-19. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the person they live with or had close contact with tests negative or their healthcare provider does not consider the illness to be COVID-19, the employee may return to work. ○ If the person they live with or had close contact with tests positive for COVID-19, send the employee home and follow the guidance for employees who are close contacts of a positive person above.
<p>RESTAURANT PATRON</p> <p>Employee eats at a restaurant that later announces that an employee at the restaurant tested positive for COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employee may remain at work as long as they do not have symptoms. They do <u>not</u> need to be tested unless they develop symptoms. ○ If the employee begins to display symptoms consistent with COVID-19, follow the steps above in the “Employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19” scenario



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¹Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the other person for a period of more than 15 minutes cumulative total within a 24 hours period. In addition, close contacts include people who provide care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19; people who had direct physical contact with the infected person (e.g. hugged or kissed them); people who shared eating and drinking utensils (forks, spoons, cups or glasses) with the sick person; and people who were sneezed or coughed on by someone with COVID-19.

²CDC and DHEC have issued guidance on when a person may be considered recovered. The criteria below should be used to determine eligibility to return to work. Negative tests results are not required.

1. 10 days have passed since their symptoms began, AND
2. They are free of fever (100.4° F [38° C] or greater using an oral thermometer) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines, AND
3. Their other symptoms have improved.

Those who test positive but never have symptoms should stay out of work and self-quarantine until ten days after their test specimen was collected.

³Assessment and guidance for coworkers of someone who tests positive for COVID-19:

- A person infected with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting 48 hours prior to the onset of their symptoms (or two days before the specimen for the test was collected if they had no symptoms) until they are released from isolation (see criteria in 2 above).
- Person not at work when contagious: No further steps need to be taken if it is determined they were not at work during their contagious period.
- Person at work while contagious:
 - Anyone who meets the close contact definition¹ must complete an appropriate quarantine period as described in “Close Contact to a Case” section. While wearing face masks or cloth face coverings is strongly encouraged, their use does not change the recommendations for close contacts.
 - Other coworkers who work in the same area as the infected person but are not close contacts should be notified of their potential exposure (while maintaining the infected person’s confidentiality) and advised to self-monitor for signs or symptoms of



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COVID-19 for 14 days. This includes taking their temperature and assessing themselves for symptoms twice a day. A [monitoring worksheet](#) they may find helpful is available on the DHEC webpage. They do not need to quarantine or be tested unless they develop symptoms. Social distancing and mask wearing are even more important for these employees.

Notes:

- The CDC updated its webpage with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) as more is learned about the disease.
- The approach is the same for a person who tests positive but does not have symptoms as for a person who has symptoms and tests positive. The only difference is that the contagious period is considered to begin two days prior to the test specimen being collected rather than two days prior to symptoms beginning.
- [COVID-19 screening & testing sites](#) linked on the DHEC webpage. Please review the information about [testing types](#). DHEC and the CDC recommend molecular (PCR, or swab) testing for diagnosis of acute infection. Antibody testing should not be used alone for this purpose. The testing referenced in this guidance is the swab (molecular, or PCR) testing.
- The guidance may be different for [critical infrastructure workers](#) who are exposed. Consult with DHEC if you have further questions for these employees.

Other Resources:

- General COVID-19:
 - [accelerateSC](#)
 - [Businesses and Employers](#) (DHEC)
 - [CDC](#)
 - [DHEC](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (DHEC)
 - [US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)
- Restaurants:
 - [Food Safety Operations and Re-Opening Toolkit](#) (DHEC)
 - [Opening Restaurants Phase Two Guidance](#) (SC Restaurant and Lodging Association)
 - [Palmetto Priority](#)



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This is consistent with guidance available as of December 18, 2020 and may be updated as new information becomes available.

Updates

First posted: July 9, 2020.

Revised: July 25, 2020

- Updated in footnote 2 the duration a person must remain fever-free to be released from isolation, as CDC criteria changed from 3 days to 24 hours.

- Revised: December 17, 2020
 - Updated to include new CDC quarantine guidance and close contact definition