DRAFT 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
POSITIVE Employee tests positive for COVID-19	- 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: - 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 contact[1] 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 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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SICK BUT NO TEST Employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (either calls out sick or is at work when they begin experiencing symptoms)	• The employee should be sent home and encouraged to get tested for COVID-19. 　○ If the employee tests positive, follow the steps listed in the "Employee tests positive for COVID-19" scenario above. 　○ If the employee tests negative, and there is no known exposure to COVID-19, they may return to work when symptoms have resolved. 　○ If the employee tests negative, and there is a possible exposure (not close contact, but other co-worker), employee may return to work when symptoms have resolved or if they have visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms. 　○ 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 isolation[2] as if they had tested positive.
CLOSE CONTACT OF A CASE Employee has been in close contact[1] with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19	• If the employee is not fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or 2 weeks after single dose of Janssen vaccine), or the vaccination status is unknown, send employee home. • The employee who is not fully vaccinated should self-quarantine and is encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms andat day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms though <u>testing negative does not necessarily shorten the necessary quarantine period</u> 　○ If the employee was in close contact with someone with whom they do not live, they must quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with the positive person. • Options to shorten quarantine can be considered in an employer's policies around COVID. DHEC currently follows CDC's recommendations https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html • If the employee volunteers to provide evidence that they are fully vaccinated, they do not need to be sent home immediately. They should be encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms or at day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms. They should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

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CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE SICK (NO TEST) Employee has been in close contact[1] with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19	• 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: ○ Send employee home and follow the guidance in the section above.

CONTACT OF A CONTACT
 	
Employee lives with someone who has been in close contact[1] with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19
	• 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.
	    ○ If the person they live with or had close contact with tests negative 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.
	    ○ If the employee volunteers to provide evidence that they are fully vaccinated, they do not need to be sent home immediately. They should be encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms and at day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms. They should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

RESTAURANT PATRON Employee eats at a restaurant that later announces that an employee at the restaurant tested positive for COVID-19	• 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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[1]Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the other person for a period of more than 15 minutes.

[2]CDC 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 <u>not</u> 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.

[3]Assessment 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).
- <u>Person not at work when contagious</u>: No further steps need to be taken if it is determined they were not at work during their contagious period.
- <u>Person at work while contagious</u>:
  - <u>Close contact:</u> Anyone who spent 15 minutes or more within six feet of the infected employee during their contagious period is considered a close contact. Recommendations vary differ depending on vaccination status. See scenarios above.
  - <u>Other coworkers</u> 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 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 <u>not</u> need to quarantine or be tested unless they develop symptoms. Social distancing and mask wearing are even more important for these employees.

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Definitions

Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes) from 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or specimen collection for an asymptomatic infected person) of the infected person.

Contact tracing: The practice of identifying, notifying, and monitoring individuals who may have had close contact with a person determined to be a confirmed or probable case of an infectious disease as a means of controlling the spread of infection.

Isolation: Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. They must remain at home or the place they were told to isolate and avoid contact with other people until their isolation period is over. This includes avoiding contact with those in their household as much as possible.

Fully vaccinated: A person is considered fully vaccinated, ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

Quarantine: Quarantine is used to separate people who are close contacts of someone with a contagious disease, like COVID-19, from others for a period of time to see if they become sick. This is a method to prevent the spread of disease. When someone is quarantining, they should stay home and avoid contact with other people until the quarantine period is over. This includes people in their household as much as it is possible.

Screening: Routine, typically performed at least once weekly, viral (PCR or antigen) testing of asymptomatic individuals in order to identify asymptomatic individuals infected with SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

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.

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- [COVID-19 screening & testing sites](#) and [COVID-19 mobile testing clinics](#) are 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.

Other Resources:

- General
  - [Businesses and Employers](#) (DHEC)
  - [CDC](#)
  - [DHEC](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (DHEC)
  - [OSHA](#)
  - [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](#)

This is consistent with guidance available as of August 10, 2021 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 August 10, 2021
  - Updated guidance for fully vaccinated vs. not fully vaccinated employees

- o Deleted reference to "critical infrastructure employees"
- o Updated links to resources
- o Added definitions