What To Do When An Employee Tests Positive For COVID-19

You have an employee that has tested positive for COVID-19, now what?

Has this employee had any interaction with other employees or customers during the last 14 days?

NO

1. Provide employee with Emergency Paid Sick Leave request form and information about when they are able to return to work. We have provided you a sample EPSL packet for convenience. Please note, employees must seek care from a physician or be advised by a physician to self-isolate to qualify for EPSL.

2. Skip to protocol below for informing management and notifying employees.

YES

1. Ask employee to provide a list of anyone they were in close contact with for 48 hours leading up to their symptoms. **Follow the steps below for identifying and notifying close contacts.**

2. Provide them with Emergency Paid Sick Leave request form and information about when they are able to return to work.

Informing Close Contact Employees

The CDC defines close contact as any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes.

2. Any employees the affected employee listed as a close contact should be notified that they were possibly exposed and should quarantine for 14 days. Be certain to maintain confidentiality for the COVID positive employee.

2. Provide them with EPSL packet, which includes information on applying for leave and return to work protocol. Please note, employees must seek care from a physician or be advised by a physician to self-isolate to qualify for EPSL.

3. Advise the employee to see a doctor for assistance and testing questions.

Next, inform management ➜

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Inform Management & Prepare For Employee Notification

1. Prepare an announcement to be delivered by a member of upper management. Remind managers the importance of respecting the confidentiality of the employee and close contacts when speaking to other employees about it.

2. Reiterate your company's exposure/return to work protocols and help managers prepare their departments to provide coverage while these workers are out.

3. While delivering the message, remember:
   • Ask for questions and be sure to give clear responses while maintaining confidentiality for affected employees.
   • Provide support; remind employees of resources available to them such as counseling through an EAP or health plan.
   • Share ways employees can continue a dialog with management after the initial meeting.
   • Address concerns and reiterate what the company is doing to keep employees safe.
   • Evaluate accommodations that can be made to make employees feel safe in the workplace.

Communication With Employees

When informing employees:

- Make these announcements in small groups that allow for social distancing and minimize possible further exposure.

- Remind all employees to respect of the confidentiality of affected workers

- Ask for the employees' support of company guidelines and their concern for everyone's health and safety – Review your company protocols.

FAQs

When are employees eligible to come back to work?

Ultimately, this is up to you as an employer. It is important to remember that as an employer you are legally obligated to provide a workplace safe from possible hazards, including Coronavirus. In addition to following your IIPP for disinfecting the workplace after an exposure, consider the following recommendations from the CDC for determining when an employee can return:

- Symptomatic employees may return to work after:
    - At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and
    - At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and
    - Symptoms have improved

- Asymptomatic employees may return after:
    - At least 10 days have passed since test
    - At least 14 days have passed since exposure

People with weakened immune systems or COVID-19 symptoms that do not improve over 14 days may need to stay home longer. Advise employees who report this to seek medical advice and/or provide clearance to return to work.

What if an employee has been exposed outside of work?

Testing is recommended for ALL close contacts of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 patient.

- Potentially exposed employees who **have** symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and follow CDC recommended steps.

- Potentially exposed employees who **do not have** symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.

- If an employee needs to self-quarantine, advise them to get documentation from their medical provider advising self-quarantine is necessary in order to qualify for EPSL.

Sources:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Contract Tracing for COVID-19, July 24th 2020 —
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html
U.S. Department of Labor, Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers, July 24th, 2020 —
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions