

HUMAN RESOURCES MEMORANDUM 24-002		DATE ISSUED: 1/17/2024
SUBJECT: UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)		REFERENCE: CDPH, CDC Cal/OSHA
TO: All Department of General Services (DGS) Employees		SUPERCEDES: HR Memo 23-010

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS SHARED WITH ALL EMPLOYEES

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide employees with updated direction regarding State employee coronavirus (COVID-19) from [the California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#), [Center For Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [California Department of Industrial Relations \(DIR\)](#).

COVID-19 Updates

On January 9, 2024, CDPH provided updates on the definition of the infectious period and testing recommendations.

Definition of Infectious Period

"Infectious period" for the purpose of the California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations, is now defined as:

- For Employees who tested positive for COVID-19 with symptoms, it is a minimum of 24 hours from the day of symptom onset:
 - Employees who tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work if 24 hours have passed with no fever; without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
 - Their symptoms are mild and improving.
- For Employees who tested positive for COVID-19 with no symptoms, there is no infectious period for the purpose of isolation or exclusion. If symptoms develop, the criteria above will apply.

Notes on Changes to Testing Recommendations:

- CDPH no longer recommends testing for all close contacts and instead recommends testing only for:
 - All people with new COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Close contacts who are at higher risk of severe disease or who have contact with people who are at higher risk of severe disease.
- Regardless of CDPH recommendations, employers must continue to make COVID-19 testing available at no cost and during paid time to all employees with a close contact, except for asymptomatic employees who recently recovered from COVID-19.

- In workplace outbreaks or major outbreaks, the COVID-19 Prevention Regulations still require testing of all close contacts in outbreaks, and everyone in the exposed group in major outbreaks. Employees who refuse to test and have symptoms must be excluded for at least 24 hours from symptom onset and can return to work only when they have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and symptoms are mild and improving.

Please note that the requirement to [report a positive COVID-19 case](#) remains in effect. Please reference the section of this memo for "Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case and Exclusion from Work."

Reminders-COVID-19 Guidance

Face Coverings:

Employers must provide face coverings and ensure they are worn by employees when CDPH requires their use.

- COVID cases who return to work must wear a face covering indoors for 10 days from the start of symptoms or if the person did not have COVID-19 symptoms, 10 days from the date of their first positive COVID-19 test.

Note: Employees still have the right to wear face coverings at work and to request and receive face coverings from the employer when working indoors and during outbreaks.

N95 Masks

N95 masks must be available to **all** staff upon request regardless of vaccination status and without fear of reprisal. If you have any questions, please reach out to your manager/supervisor.

Managers and Supervisors should coordinate through their designated Health and Safety Coordinators.

Physical Distancing

- During an outbreak (three or more employees in an exposed group), employers are required to evaluate whether physical distancing is necessary to control the transmission of COVID-19.
- Physical distancing must be used in a major outbreak (20 or more employees in an exposed group) for all employees, regardless of vaccination status except when an employer demonstrates that maintaining six feet of distance is not feasible. When it is not feasible to maintain six feet of distance, persons must be as far apart as feasible.
- Employers are under an ongoing requirement to assess workplace hazards and implement controls to prevent transmission of disease. There may be circumstances in which employers determine that physical distancing is necessary in their workplace.

Definition of Close Contact

Close contact is defined as follows:

- For indoor spaces of 400,000 cubic feet or fewer, a close contact is someone who shares the same indoor airspace with a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the COVID-19 case's infectious period.
- For indoor airspaces of more than 400,000 cubic feet, a close contact is within six feet of a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the COVID-19 case's infectious period.

Spaces that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls (e.g., offices, suites, rooms, waiting areas, bathrooms, or break or eating areas that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls) must be considered distinct indoor airspaces.

For the purposes of identifying close contacts and exposures, symptomatic and asymptomatic confirmed cases who end isolation in accordance with CDPH Isolation and Quarantine Guidance are no longer considered to be within their infectious period.

Definition of Confirmed Case

Confirmed Case is defined as:

- A person who has received a positive result of the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus as confirmed by a COVID-19 viral test or as diagnosed by a physician or clinic.

Employees who test positive:

1. **Stay home if you have COVID-19 symptoms**, until you have not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication AND other [COVID-19 symptoms](#) are mild and improving.
 - If you do not have symptoms, you should follow the recommendations below to reduce exposure to others.
2. **Use face covering** when you are around other people indoors for the 10 days* after you become sick or test positive (if no symptoms). You may remove your face covering sooner than 10 days if you have two sequential negative tests at least one day apart. Day 0 is symptom onset date or positive test date.
3. **Avoid contact with people at higher-risk for severe COVID-19 for 10 days***. Higher-risk individuals include the elderly, those who live in congregate care facilities, those who have immunocompromising conditions, and those at higher risk for serious illness.
4. **Seek Treatment**. If you have symptoms, particularly if you are at [higher risk for severe COVID-19](#), speak with a healthcare provider as soon as you test positive. You may be eligible for [antiviral medicines](#) or other treatments for COVID-19. COVID-19 antiviral medicines work best if taken as soon as possible, and within 5-7 days from when symptoms start.
 - Call 1-833-422-4255 if you are unable to contact a healthcare provider, or use the [treatment options](#) to find one.

*The potential infectious period is 2 days before the date of symptoms began or the positive test date (if no symptoms) through Day 10. (Day 0 is the symptom onset date or positive test date).

Employees identified as close contacts of cases:

- **If you have [new COVID-19 symptoms](#)**, you should [test](#) and mask right away. **If you do not have symptoms**, and are at [higher risk](#) of severe COVID-19 infection and would benefit from treatment, you should test within 5 days.
- **If you do not have symptoms** and have contact with people who are at higher risk for severe infection, you should mask indoors when around such people for 10 days. Consider testing within 5 days after the last exposure date (Day 0) and before contact with higher-risk people.

Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case

The requirements outlined below to [report a positive COVID-19 case](#) remain in effect.

Employee Responsibilities:

Employees shall report a positive COVID-19 test result to their manager/supervisor immediately.

Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities:

Once notification is received, the manager/supervisor shall follow the steps outlined below:

1. Report the positive COVID-19 test result of a DGS employee to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) Return to Work unit, by completing the [DGS Employee COVID-19 Positive Submittal](#) survey and answering the questions after gathering the necessary information from the employee.

Both

1. The manager/supervisor will be asking the employee a series of questions. It is extremely important the questions are answered thoroughly and timely.
 - Employee name
 - Employee classification
 - DGS email address
 - Employee phone number (phone number where employee can be contacted at)
 - Date of the test
 - Date of positive test result
 - Type of COVID-19 test
 - Were they symptomatic, and that is why they got tested?
 - When did they become symptomatic?
 - Date employee was last working in the State facility/building
 - Building name(s) and address(es) of all facility building(s) the employee last reported
 - What common areas of the work location(s) did the employee frequent (for tracing purposes during the infectious period)

- Who did they have close contact with on their last day at the facility?
- Was the employee hospitalized?
 - If yes, what facility and what date were they admitted?

2. Discuss potential leave options. Questions: OHRReturnToWork@dgs.ca.gov.

Close Contact Notification

Employees identified as close contacts within the infectious period will receive a memorandum via email from OHR within 24 hours. The notification memorandum will include further instructions.

The name of the COVID-19 positive employee shall not be disclosed.

Return-to-Work Testing Criteria:

The following [Cal/OSHA](#) guidance is specific to the return-to-work testing criteria for COVID-19 cases and employees excluded from work:

- COVID-19 tests may be self-administered and self-read only if independent verification of the results can be provided such as a time-stamped photograph.
- Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test results will continue to be accepted.

Continuous Requirements

All other requirements to comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cal/OSHA, CDPH and local county public health department requirements remain in effect.

DGS will continue to minimize COVID-19 exposure and address COVID-19 concerns and reported hazards as outlined in the DGS [COVID-19 Prevention Plan \(CPP\)](#).

To reduce the risk of becoming infected and potentially spreading COVID-19 virus at work, DGS employees must adhere to the following guidance and information regardless of vaccination status:

- If experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and unable to work, employees should utilize leave credits.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

Questions

If employees have questions regarding the guidance and information in this memorandum, they are encouraged to contact their manager/supervisor and/or employee representative as appropriate.

Managers/supervisors are encouraged to contact OHR Return to Work Unit at OHRReturnToWork@dgs.ca.gov.