



Workplace COVID-19 Prevention & Response Toolkit

*Guidance for employers
when an employee has COVID-19*



Developed by

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Responding to COVID-19 in Your Workplace

This document provides resources for employers with employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and want to prevent further transmission in the workplace. It is also meant to be a useful tool to help employers prepare for and prevent COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.

How to Use This Toolkit and Checklist

Using this toolkit and checklist will help employers with best infection prevention guidance and assist with needed information to track exposures at their workplace.

Notes associated with each section are available following this checklist as an explanation of terminology, additional details, and both employer and employee resources.

It is recommended that employers refer to the [Oregon Health Authority's Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines](#) and [Oregon's OSHA's COVID-19 Rules](#) for details around measures that are required for both preventing and responding to COVID-19 cases in the workplace.

- [OHA's Quarantine and Isolation Guidelines](#)
- [OHA's General Guidance for Employers and Organizations](#)
- [Washington County's Workplace Guidance](#)
- [OR OSHA's COVID-19 Rules](#)

Oregon OSHA Consultative Services provides free, non-enforcement, confidential occupational health and safety services to employers in Oregon to identify and fix potential infection control issues without punishment. [Learn more and request consultative services.](#)

Stigma and Discrimination

It is up to employees whether they want to share their COVID diagnosis with their employer or coworkers. However, employers should *strongly encourage* employees to disclose a positive COVID-19 test result and/or COVID symptoms as soon as possible. Ensure that employees are willing and comfortable sharing this information by clearly communicating confidentiality policies, sick leave policies and assuring employees that their standing will not be impacted by having COVID-19. Some Oregon employees have reported experiencing discrimination because of fears of coronavirus, particularly around race and national origin.

A business cannot turn away or ask an employee to leave work simply because they think race or national origin make a person more likely to have or spread coronavirus. A person's ethnicity, language or association with a country or region are not risk factors for COVID-19.

Discrimination based on race, national origin, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, disability or other characteristics is illegal.

Symptoms of COVID-19 and How It Spreads

People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms — from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People may have one or more of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

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

The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) spreads mainly between people through the air via microscopic particles called aerosols. Employers can reduce the risk of spread by asking employees to stay home when ill, cover their coughs and sneezes, practice physical distancing, and wear face coverings or other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as increasing ventilation and air flow in areas where people are together.

A well fitted cloth mask provides protection from spreading the virus. KN-95 and N-95 masks may be utilized if available. KN-95 and N-95 masks are disposable so an adequate supply must be available for employee use. Well fitted cloth masks remain an option and may improve mask use because they offer more comfort and ease for day long mask use.

Reporting Requirements

During the current surge in COVID-19 cases, employers should suspend reporting COVID-19 cases in their workplace to WCPH. Please utilize the tools outlined in this document to best support your workplace. If you have specific questions, you can reach out to WCPH at 503-846-8123 and we will offer guidance as capacity allows.

We will notify employers when COVID case reports to WCPH are once again required per the following OAR: *Employers are required to share protected health information with the health department in accordance with Oregon Administrative Rule 333-019-0003 if requested. This applies to positive COVID-19 cases and individuals identified as close contacts.*

WORKPLACE RESPONSE CHECKLIST

ACTIONS	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable	Person Responsible
1. ISOLATE/QUARANTINE (pages 7-8) Instruct employee(s) with COVID-19 to go/stay home and isolate. Instruct exposed unvaccinated employees to go/stay home and quarantine.					
2. INVESTIGATE (page 9) Protect employee privacy by not sharing their personal information unless they give permission. Begin gathering records including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When symptoms began • When the positive test was taken • If test was a home or commercial test • When the employee last worked • Location the employee worked while infectious • The employee's schedule • Who may have been exposed • Contact information for exposed employees 					
3. ASSESS (page 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening practices at entry or other ways to monitor and track employees for symptoms • Face covering/mask policy and use for individuals • Availability of disposable masks • Signage in common areas for respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, physical distancing and face coverings/masks • Requirements for handwashing etiquette • The number of hand sanitizing stations (60%-95% alcohol) • Physical distancing measures in all work and break areas • Physical barriers added or changed work environment when physical distancing is challenging • Modifications such as markings on the floor • Training and education for all employees on proper mask use, physical distancing, cough etiquette and sick policies • Policies for home isolation for confirmed or presumptive employee • Policies for mandatory exclusion from work without penalty • Whether facility or building where confirmed or presumptive employees works should be closed 					

ACTIONS	Completed	Ongoing	Not Started	Not Applicable	Person Responsible
4. VENTILATE (page 9) CDC Building Ventilation Guidance for COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the introduction of outdoor air • Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows • Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space. • Improve central air filtration • Use portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to enhance air cleaning 					
5. NOTIFY (page 10) OR OSHA requires employers to notify exposed employees within 24 hours of being made aware of a case.					
6. INSTRUCT (page 10) Employers should instruct employees to isolation or quarantine based on illness or exposure risks.					
7. CONFIRM (page 11) Employers should ensure cases and exposed employees do not return to work before full isolation/quarantine is over.					
8. PROTECT AND PREVENT (page 11) Encourage employees to get vaccinated and provide resources for doing so. Washington County Vaccine Resources					

TERMINOLOGY

“Case” refers to an individual who has had a positive laboratory test for COVID-19.

“Presumptive case” means a person who has had an exposure to COVID-19 within the prior 14 days and is experiencing COVID-like symptoms. A person with a positive COVID-19 home test is also considered a presumptive case.

In this document, **“case,” “presumptive case”** and **“positive employee”** are used interchangeably.

“Isolation” or **“to isolate”** means the physical separation and confinement of an individual who is infected or reasonably believed to be infected with COVID-19 from non-isolated individuals in order to prevent or limit the transmission of the disease to non-isolated individuals. *Fully vaccinated people who have tested positive for COVID-19 (i.e., “breakthrough” cases) should still isolate.*

“Quarantine” means the physical separation and confinement of a non-vaccinated individual who has had exposure to COVID-19 and who does not show signs or symptoms of infection from individuals who have not been exposed in order to prevent or limit the transmission of the disease to other persons.

A case’s **“contagious period”** starts 48 hours before symptoms began **OR** 48 hours before the positive test was collected if the individual does not have symptoms. The contagious period continues for 10 days after symptoms started or the positive test was collected.

People who are considered **“exposed”** or **“close contacts”** have been within six feet of the positive employee for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period during their contagious period, regardless of vaccination status and mask use.

□ ISOLATE/QUARANTINE

Any employee with respiratory illness symptoms — regardless of vaccination status — should not come to work and should get tested for COVID-19 as able. Please refer to your worksite's sick policy.

Any employee that reports a positive test or COVID like symptoms should isolate for 5 days after illness onset **AND** until 24 hours after fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medications **AND** COVID-19 symptoms are resolved. Cases should:

Isolate for 5 days after the start of their symptoms **OR**

Isolate for 5 days after the collection date of the specimen that tested positive if they do not have symptoms

If employee has no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days, they can leave their house. Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

If employee has a fever, they should continue to stay home until fever resolves.

Isolation may need to be extended if suffering from severe illness or hospitalization related to COVID-19 or if they have a severely compromised immune system.

Exposed employees, that are unvaccinated or not up to date on vaccines, should quarantine for 5 days from the last date of their exposure to the case. They should continue to mask the final 5 days and test at day 5. All employees should stay home if symptoms develop.

Exposed employees that are up to date with vaccines and do not have symptoms are not required to quarantine. They should continue to mask the full 10 days. All close contacts should test at day 5 and stay home if symptoms develop.

Resources and Support During Isolation and Quarantine: If an employee needs help to stay home and does not have other support, WCPH can connect them with groceries and other resources to stay home safely. Have employees call 503-846-8123 and choose option 3 to leave a message. A staff member will call them back.

Employee reports exposure to COVID-19

Employee is Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)	
<p>If employee:</p> <p>Has been boosted OR Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a mask around others for 10 days. Test on day 5, if possible. <p>If they develop symptoms get a test and stay home. <i>(See case guidance below)</i></p>
<p>If employee:</p> <p>Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted OR Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted OR Are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home for 5 days. After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. If they are not able to stay at home, they must wear a mask for 10 days. Test on day 5 if possible. <i>(See case guidance below)</i> <p>If they develop symptoms: get a test and stay home</p>

Employee reports positive test or COVID like symptoms:

When Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19 or Develop Symptoms After Exposure (Isolate)	
<p>Everyone, regardless of vaccination status:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home for 5 days. If they have no symptoms or symptoms have resolved after 5 days, they can return to work. The must continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. <p>If they have a fever or worsening symptoms, they should continue to stay home until symptoms improve and fever resolved for 24 hours, without fever reducing medicines.</p>

□ INVESTIGATE

Once an employer learns of a positive employee, they should gather information including when symptoms began, when the positive test was taken, if it was a commercial or home test, when the employee last worked, locations where they worked, who may have been exposed or affected, and name, date of birth, contact information, and vaccination status of those exposed. Employers can use the COVID-19 Employee Exposure Contact Log on page 12 to help compile this information.

Determining exposure should involve consulting worker schedules to find out who was on site during the case's infectious period and discussing daily routines and interactions with the case themselves when possible. Businesses are not responsible for contact tracing; however, keeping accurate records of workers' schedules and other people who were on site will help determine who may have been exposed to the case.

Exposed but up to date vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine if they remain asymptomatic.

A pause in operations may be advisable in situations where many people were exposed during a case's contagious period. Pausing operations can be helpful in determining if there are additional cases in a workforce while eliminating the opportunity for additional exposures to occur.

□ ASSESS

Employers are required to assess their workplace for risk of COVID-19 exposure. Records associated with this required assessment may be helpful in identifying other employees who may have been affected or exposed. Review OR OSHA's [Rule Addressing the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in All Oregon Workplaces](#) for more information on conducting an exposure assessment that evaluates worker tasks and potential exposures and refer to [this page](#) for any changes to the current guidance.

Oregon OSHA has made a [Risk Assessment Template](#) and sample Risk Assessments to assist employers in completing this task.

- [OR OSHA's Rule Addressing the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in All Oregon Workplaces](#)
- [Printable signs](#)
- [OR OSHA Risk Assessment template](#)

□ VENTILATE

COVID-19 is transmitted primarily via airborne particles. Although cleaning surfaces does provide some benefit, one of the most efficient ways to reduce transmission is by improving the indoor air quality. Here are some simple steps you can take with minimal effort and little or no cost:

- Open windows and doors when weather conditions allow to increase outdoor air flow.
- Use fans to increase effectiveness of open windows.
- Redirect air vents to create directional airflow.
- Consider adding HEPA filters and air purifiers to an area.
- Adjust HVAC systems to increase total airflow to occupied spaces when possible.
- The CDC also has [more information](#) you may find helpful.

□ NOTIFY

OR OSHA requires employers to establish and implement a process to notify exposed employees that they had a work-related contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. This notification process must include the following elements:

- A mechanism for notifying exposed employees within 24 hours of the employer being made aware that an individual with COVID-19 was present in the workplace while infectious or otherwise may have had work-related contact with its employee(s) while infectious; **AND**
- Employers must protect employee privacy by not sharing their personal information unless given permission to do so. In businesses with small workforces, protecting employee privacy may be difficult. *It is not a requirement to inform employees **who** they were exposed to, only that they were exposed.* Employers can protect the identity of the case by informing other employees they were exposed at the worksite without providing more information regarding the conditions of the exposure.

□ INSTRUCT

If symptoms develop, employees should speak with their medical provider and seek testing as soon as possible. Employees should:

- Note the day any new symptoms begin.
- Seek further evaluation from a provider via telemedicine or in-person if symptoms get worse.
- Seek medical attention immediately if they develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 including: extreme difficulty breathing, bluish lips or face, constant pain or pressure in chest, severe constant dizziness or lightheadedness, confusion, difficulty waking up, slurred speech, and/or new seizures or seizures that won't stop.

Find available testing by visiting [Washington County's testing webpage](#).

The matrix below can help employers categorize employees into groups based on exposure and vaccination status and advise employees accordingly. If an employee tests positive or is symptomatic, they should isolate/quarantine regardless of vaccination status.

Employees who are:	Vaccination Status	Need to:
COVID-19 positive	Not vaccinated or vaccinated	Isolate for at least 5 days and fever-free for 24 hours, and symptoms improving + mask for 5 days following end of isolation
Exposed to COVID-19	Not vaccinated or partially vaccinated	Quarantine for 5 days, test 5 days after exposure if possible, mask for 5 days following end of quarantine
Exposed to COVID-19	Vaccine up to date	Monitor for symptoms for 10 days, test 5 days after exposure if possible, mask for 10 days following exposure
Unknown exposure, symptomatic	Not vaccinated or vaccine up to date	Isolate and test; return to work if negative test, no fever for 24 hours, and symptoms improving

□ CONFIRM

Ensure employees do not return to work before their scheduled time. Keep detailed records to confirm employees are waiting the appropriate length of time before returning to the worksite. Positive employees can return to work when:

- At least 5 days have passed since the start of symptoms (or since first positive test if person does not have symptoms); **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Other symptoms have improved.
 - A negative test is not required to return to work following their isolation period. A person may continue to test positive for up to 90 days even though no longer infectious.

□ PROTECT AND PREVENT

Encourage employees to get vaccinated or receive booster shots and provide education and resources on doing so. Vaccination continues to be the best preventive measure to protect against COVID-19 infection. The Oregon Health Authority has [many resources for employers](#) to help employees access a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine resources for Washington County are [on our website](#).

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has released [guidance under federal law](#) that makes it clear that employers of any size may require workers to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, with limited exceptions. This is also true under Oregon law.

Employees exempt by law: Most workplaces can require employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine, but some types of workers are exempt by law. These “workers” are defined at [ORS 433.407\(3\)](#). Workers may make requests for exemptions or accommodations due to disability or religion.

Contractual limitations: For employers with a unionized workforce, a collective bargaining agreement could contain direct prohibitions on mandatory vaccines in the workplace. Although less common, individual employment contracts could present similar challenges.

Reasonable accommodations: Under civil rights and disability laws, employers with mandatory COVID-19 vaccine policies will need to consider requests for exceptions for individuals with either (1) sincerely held religious convictions, or (2) a disability that prevents them from receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. While employers are not required to grant the exception if it creates an “undue hardship” on the business or a “direct threat” to the safety of the employee or others, employers should engage with the employee to determine if a reasonable accommodation is possible.

For more information, visit the [Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries website](#).



COVID-19 Employee Exposure Contact Log

Employee Name	Phone Number	Date of Birth	Last Date Exposed to the Case(s)	Family or Household Member of Case?	Vaccinated? (Y/N/U)