

COVID-19 Contact Tracing Tips and Considerations

For Non-Healthcare Employers and Non-Essential Workers

Identifying close contacts with diagnosed employees and ensuring they do not interact with others is critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Contact tracers should:

- Immediately identify and interview people with COVID-19.
- Support home-based self-isolation of diagnosed and exposed employees.
- Warn close contacts of their exposure, assess their symptoms and risk, and provide instructions for next steps.
- Link those with symptoms to testing and care.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Establish a COVID-19 coordinator or team. Employers may find it useful to identify a coordinator or a team to oversee COVID-19 related activities. The COVID-19 coordinator/team should serve as a resource to the employer as the primary point of contact for coordinating all COVID-19 activities.
- Employers can use the guidance from [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Businesses and Workplaces](#) web page to create a COVID-19 preparedness, response, and control plan.
- Contact tracing should be conducted for close contacts (any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) of laboratory-confirmed or probable COVID-19 patients.
- [An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours \(or 2 days\) before the person exhibits symptoms](#) or tests positive for COVID-19.
- **Tested Positive:** Those contacts who test positive (symptomatic or asymptomatic) should be managed as a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- **Symptomatic:** Symptomatic close contacts should self-isolate and follow the [CDC symptom based protocol](#).
- **Exposed:** Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for *14 days after their last exposure* to that person.

Operational Considerations:

1. Who will conduct contact notification?
2. Has the contact-tracer been trained regarding confidentiality and safety?
3. Can you incorporate technology?
4. When is in-person notification needed?
5. Have you provided your contact-tracer with the necessary PPE and safety protocols?
6. Do you have an interpreter available, if necessary?
7. How will notification of exposure be handled for visitors?
8. How will you notify multiple employees when many contacts are within a work setting?
9. Do you have COVID best practices to share with the exposed employee such as [CDC guidance](#) for exposed individuals?

COMMUNICATING WITH THE DIAGNOSED AND EXPOSED EMPLOYEES

- Individuals can be contacted through different channels such as phone, text, email, or in-person (if appropriate) in the primary language of the individual.
- **Every effort should be made to reach the person remotely before attempting in-person communication.** An employer's protocol should clearly outline the primary and secondary means of communicating with a diagnosed employee and a close contact.
- Employees holding in-person interviews/notifications should be provided with gloves, mask/face coverings, and either safety glasses or a face shield.
- If speaking with the individual remotely, be sure to verify his/her identity through a series of questions such as date of employment, name of manager, and date of birth.
- The conversation should be conducted in the individual's primary language (through interpretation services, if necessary). Special consideration should be given to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate communications, if possible.
- **Ensure and protect confidentiality** – you may not reveal the identity of the diagnosed employee even if the contact is able to correctly guess. Likewise, you must also protect the confidentiality and private health information of the contact with whom you speak.

DIAGNOSED EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW

- Reassure the employee that his/her name will not be shared, even if asked.
- Work with the employee to help him/her recall everyone with whom they have had close contact with during the time they may have been infectious.
- Obtain specific close contact information including the names of employees, visitors, customers, and vendors.
- Gather specific information regarding the date(s) of contact, the location, and the length of time.

EXPOSURE CONTACT NOTIFICATION

- The employer should notify all individuals (employees and otherwise) within 24 hours of their close contact with an individual with confirmed or probable COVID-19.
- **The identity of the employee or other identifying information must not be revealed, alluded to, or confirmed by the contact tracer, even if explicitly asked by a contact.** The employer should notify people with whom the employee had close contact that they might have been exposed to COVID-19 (but not of the employee's identity).
- Protocols should be in place to provide services to people who are deaf or who have hearing. The [CDC's Notification of Exposure – A Contact Tracer's Guide for COVID-19](#) focuses on communication strategies for contact interviews and provides suggested language for each topic area covered in an interview. While developed for the healthcare industry, this guidance provides some useful tips and talking-points.

Messaging for employees who had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19:

- For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay at home away from others and self-quarantine for 14 days after you had close contact with the person with confirmed or probable COVID-19.
- Self-quarantine means staying home, monitoring your health, and maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet) from others at all times.
- If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a mask. This will help protect the people around you.
- If you need support or assistance with self-quarantine, then your health department or a local community organization may be able to provide assistance.
- Self-quarantine helps slow the spread of COVID-19 and can help keep your family, your friends, and other people you have been around from possibly getting COVID-19.
- Take your temperature twice a day, monitor yourself for any symptoms of COVID-19, and notify your health department if you develop symptoms. Seek medical care if symptoms worsen or become severe.
- Reassure the person that the discussions with the employer's contact tracer will be confidential. This means that an employee's medical information

Get the latest information, guidance and resources on Coronavirus (COVID-19) to help you protect what matters most at hubinternational.com/coronavirus.

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