

What to do if a guest or visitor at your establishment tests positive for COVID-19

October 2020

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) provides COVID-19 [Sector Specific Guidance](#) to all businesses in Vermont to help keep employees, employers, and those who visit their establishments safe.

This guidance will help the following facilities prepare for a potential visitor or guest who tests positive for COVID-19:

- Locations that provide food and lodging, such as hotels
- Locations that host conferences, events, or gatherings
- Locations of commerce such as stores, restaurants, or rest stops

All facilities should develop or expand their protocol to include preparation for COVID-19 and routine actions they can take to keep guests, visitors and staff safe.

Visit the [Vermont Department of Health COVID-19](#) and the [ACCD COVID-19 Recovery Resource Center](#) pages to get the most updated information and activity in your area.

What should I know about COVID-19?

- Infections can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.
- COVID-19 is thought to spread through close contact from person-to-person, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- People who test positive should not return to work until they have completed [home isolation](#).
- Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.
- Areas that were used by someone who tested positive for COVID-19 can be used by other people once the areas have been [cleaned and disinfected](#). If it has been seven days since the person was in the area, additional cleaning beyond routine cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

What is the role of the Health Department?

- When a person tests positive for COVID-19, the Health Department contacts them to find out with whom they were in close contact during their infectious period.
 - The infectious period is the time during which someone infected with COVID-19 has the potential to spread it to others. It begins two days before the start of symptoms or two days before a positive test result for people who did not have symptoms and continues [until they have recovered](#).

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- Close contact means being within 6 feet of another person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. The Health Department follows up with each close contact to assess their risk of COVID-19 and provide them with information about the infection, testing, and [quarantine](#).

How will I know if a guest or visitor tested positive?

- The Health Department will reach out to you if a person who tested positive for COVID-19 was in close contact with staff, guests, or visitors during their infectious period while at your establishment.
 - If someone who visits your establishment tests positive for COVID-19 but was not at your establishment while they were infectious, you will not be contacted by the Health Department. That individual would not pose a risk of exposing others while they were at your establishment.
- An individual who tests positive may also reach out to you.
 - You may receive information about someone who tested positive prior to the Health Department reaching out. The Health Department will only conduct contact tracing on verified cases of individuals who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Some people who are infected with COVID-19 have mild or no symptoms and not everyone who has symptoms gets tested. It may not be possible to identify everyone who was infectious while at your establishment. Because of this, emphasis should be put on everyday prevention strategies including wearing a [face mask](#), [physically distancing](#), and [handwashing](#) to help prevent the spread of germs.

What steps should I take when I learn that a guest or visitor tests positive?

- Work with staff to determine if anyone had close contact with the guest or visitor. If a staff member believes they had close contact or would like to talk through their level of risk, they can contact the Health Department at 802-863-7200.
- If you are contacted by the Health Department, work with them as they trace all the close contacts of the person who tested positive.
- The Health Department will work with your establishment by providing information and guidance and answering your questions.
- Determine areas used by the person while they were infectious and close those off until appropriately [cleaned](#).
- If a guest or visitor tells you they tested positive for COVID-19, have them call the Health Department at 802-863-7240.

How should I clean the space?

- When possible, wait 24 hours after the person was in the space before you clean or disinfect those areas. If this is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

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- Wash your hands and put on gloves before cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- Cleaning with soap and water **reduces** the number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting **kills** germs on surfaces.
- Visibly dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Use [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) and follow the directions on the bottle.
- Remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly after cleaning.
- Open any windows in areas used by the infected person to increase air circulation.
- Staff should wear gloves when cleaning and handling trash.

Where can I find more information and support?

- [Stay Home Stay Safe Sector Specific Guidance](#)
- [Vermont Health Department's COVID-19 Website](#)
- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [How to Cope with Job Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Health Resources for Workplaces and Employees](#)
- [What to do if you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19](#)
- [Coping With Stress](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)