COVID-19 in the Workplace: A Checklist for Employers

December 2021

This guidance is for general work sites. More specific guidance for certain sectors, such as congregate living facilities, health care facilities, and critical care infrastructure workers, supersedes this guidance.

When you need to act
If a person with a positive COVID-19 test (PCR or antigen) was at your workplace or facility while infectious, take the action steps below. The infectious period starts two days before symptoms began and continues until they are recovered. For people who haven't had symptoms, the infectious period starts two days before they got tested. You may be notified directly by the person who tested positive or their family, or by the Health Department.

You do not need to take any action if the person who tested positive was not at your workplace while infectious.

Action Steps
☐ Tell the Health Department about anyone who was in your workplace while they were infectious by phone or email.
   • **Call** 802-863-7240 x 8 during 7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday.
   • **Email** Covid19.WorkplaceContactTracing@vermont.gov with only the date, facility name and location, and point of contact at your facility (include the name, position, phone number and email address).

We will respond with a secure email for you to reply with the details of your situation. Include the following information:
   o Name
   o Date of birth
   o Positive person’s role in the facility
   o Type of test (Antigen, PCR, Home Test)
   o Date of test
   o Where they were tested, if known
   o Symptoms
   o Date that symptoms started
   o Start of infectious period (two days before symptoms started or when the test was taken)
   o Dates they were in the facility while they were infectious
   o Potential areas of exposure in the facility
   o Add any other notes or important details
   o Attach your line list of close contacts
☐ Conduct contact tracing to identify close contacts.

- Use the definition of close contact to identify people in your workplace. Close contact means being within 6 feet, for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, of someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period.

- Contact employees, patients, patrons, guests, and others who meet the close contact definition (including vaccinated and unvaccinated contacts) and who were exposed in the facility. Use the provided template letter, “Close contact guidance after exposure to COVID-19 at workplace or event” to notify close contacts. All of the guidance for close contacts found in the letter is also available at www.healthvermont.gov/aboutclosecontact.

- For health care settings, see Guidance for Work Exclusions among Health Care Workers who have been Exposed.

- The Health Department will interview everyone with COVID-19 and will notify all contacts outside of the facility. The Health Department will not follow up with in-facility contacts, i.e., staff, patrons, patients, guests.

☐ When close contact status is unknown (you cannot clearly determine if they are or are not a close contact), this would be considered a low-risk exposure.

- Anyone identified as having a low-risk exposure should be notified using the provided template letter, “Low-risk exposure to COVID-19 at workplace or event.” The letter includes recommendations to monitor themselves for symptoms and to seek testing 5-7 days after the exposure. Those identified as having low risk exposures are not recommended to quarantine.

☐ People with COVID-19 can return to the facility after completing isolation.

- People with COVID-19 can continue to test positive long after they’ve recovered and are no longer contagious. It should not be required for an employee who had COVID19 to test negative before they can return to work.

- It is not recommended to ask for documentation of a negative result before allowing a recovered person to return to work.

- The Health Department does not provide letters for employees to return to work or to be excused from work.

☐ Complete the line list template and have it ready when you contact the Health Department. A “line list” is a spreadsheet for you to enter in the names and contact information of people who had close contact with the person who tested positive.

- Include all close contacts on the line list regardless of whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated. Only unvaccinated close contacts will be recommended to quarantine, but it is important to notify both groups of an exposure so they can take appropriate next steps.

Resources

- What to do if you are a close contact
- What to do if you test positive for COVID-19
• Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration
• Health Department’s COVID-19 web page for Businesses and Employees
• Agency of Commerce and Community Development