HR Lead and Supervisor Guide for COVID Exposures

The following scenarios regarding employee exposure and testing were developed by the University of Minnesota COVID-19 Technical Team in partnership with the Health Emergency Response Office (HERO) and Boynton Health. The COVID-19 Technical Team, with representatives in Duluth and the Twin Cities, consults frequently with the HERO office and MDH and can partner with units in helping to address exposure. These scenarios are intended to provide guidance for HR Leads, campus and unit HR staff, and supervisors.

Scenario 1: Employee was exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19

An employee notifies the supervisor that they have had an exposure to COVID-19 through a close contact. Close contact is being within six feet of a COVID-19-positive individual for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours, regardless of whether either person was wearing a face covering.

- **Testing recommendation:** It is recommended that an employee get tested 5 to 7 days after a known exposure.
- **Guidance based on test results:**
  - MDH current guidelines recommend a 14-day quarantine. A 10-day quarantine is allowed if the exposure is not from someone in their household and if the employee is not a healthcare worker.
  - If the test is **positive**, MDH may conduct case investigation and contact tracing and the employee may elect to tell their supervisor and close contacts themselves.
  - If the test is **negative**, the employee follows healthcare provider or public health investigator guidance on when to return to work. The employee does not need to provide medical documentation to return to work.

**Supervisor’s Role**
- Advises the employee that they may not return to work until approved by a healthcare provider or public health investigator.

**Unit HR and COVID-19 Technical Team Roles**
- Based on the needs of the supervisor and employee, unit HR will consult with COVID-19 Technical Team. To reach the Technical Team, please contact Erik Mundahl by emailing emundahl@umn.edu.
Scenario 2: An employee has symptoms of COVID-19

An employee notifies the supervisor that they have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea).

- **Test recommendations:** The employee should get tested and isolate. **PLEASE NOTE:** If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should be told to leave work immediately, get tested, and isolate.

- **Guidance based on test results:**
  - If the test result is **positive**, the employee must remain in isolation for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or if they are symptom-free 10 days after their test date. MDH may conduct a case investigation and contact tracing or the employee may elect to inform their supervisor regarding their positive test and notify close contacts directly. The employee will follow healthcare provider or public health investigator guidance on when to return to work.
  - If the test is **negative**, the employee will follow healthcare provider or public health investigator guidance on when to return to work.

**Supervisor’s Role:**
- The supervisor advises the employee that they should not return to work until advised to do so by a healthcare professional or a public health investigator.

**Unit HR and COVID-19 Technical Team Roles**
- Based on the needs of supervisor and employee, unit HR consults with the **COVID-19 Technical Team**. To reach the Technical Team, please contact Erik Mundahl by emailing emundahl@umn.edu.

Scenario 3: An employee is COVID-positive

As instructed by MDH, an employee is notifying close contacts and supervisors that they have tested positive for COVID-19. In many cases, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is asking people who test positive to contact those that they may have been in close contact with. In some cases, MDH is conducting case investigation and contact tracing and notifying exposed employees directly.

- **Guidance based on a positive test:**
An employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 must stay in isolation for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and their symptoms are improving. If they are asymptomatic, 10 days after their test date.

An employee who was exposed to COVID-19 needs to quarantine for 14 days and should get tested 5 to 7 days after exposure. Based on revised guidelines from MDH, a 10-day quarantine is allowed if the exposure is not from contact with a household member and if the employee is not a healthcare worker. A 14-day quarantine is still the preferred quarantine time period.

If they later test positive for COVID-19, they must stay in isolation for 10 days since the onset of symptoms or 10 days from the date of their test.

The employee follows healthcare provider or public health investigator guidance on when to return to work.

Supervisor’s Role

- Determine if workplace safety protocols were followed, and contact unit HR if they were not. If safety protocols were not followed and close contact occurred, either the employee, or the supervisor/unit HR with the employee’s consent, will inform coworker(s) who were exposed and advise them to get tested and quarantine for 14 days unless the employee says that MDH will notify close contacts.
- The supervisor must complete the First Report of Injury form for a workplace exposure to COVID-19.
- Without identifying the individual by name, unit HR or the supervisor will use this sample communication to inform anyone who may have been exposed [within six feet of the COVID-19 positive employee for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours, regardless of whether either person was wearing a face covering] in the workplace.
- Advises the employee that they should not return to work until approved by a healthcare professional or public health investigator.

Unit HR and COVID-19 Technical Team Roles

- Based on the needs of the supervisor and employee, unit HR consults with the COVID-19 Technical Team. To reach the Technical Team, please contact Erik Mundahl by emailing emundahl@umn.edu.

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