



Employer Guide for COVID-19 Worksite Exposure

Effective date: 8/11/21

Purpose: To provide guidance to local businesses in the event employees may have been exposed to COVID-19 at their worksite

Audience: Employers – Human Resources, Occupational Health, Managers/Supervisors

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A Vibrant and Healthy Berkeley for All

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Key Terminology

- **Case:** A person with a positive COVID-19 lab or someone who was diagnosed by their provider as having COVID-19.
- **Close Contact:** Exposure of less than six (6) feet for a cumulative of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- **Infectious period:** The period of time when a positive case can infect other individuals. Infectious period starts 2 days before either; symptom onset if symptomatic or first positive test if asymptomatic, until they meet criteria for [release of isolation](#)
- **Exposure:** The potential for COVID-19 transmission at the worksite
- **Exposure Dates:** The dates a positive employee was onsite during their infectious period.
- **Quarantine:** period of time a person identified as a close contact need to stay home and away from others to monitor for symptoms and/or test and to avoid potential transmission.
- **Isolation:** period of time a confirmed case needs to stay home and away from others to avoid infecting others.

1. Instructions: Identifying Employees Potentially Exposed to COVID-19 when there is ≤ 2 confirmed case(s)

If an employer learns that an employee has tested positive or when a possible exposure to COVID-19 occurs in the workplace, employers need to be prepared to respond.

Once a COVID-19 case is identified among employees, the employer should conduct an investigation to identify all close contacts associated with the workplace (both employees and non-employees who spent time at the site) who had exposure to the case during the infectious period. The employer will need to determine the day and time the COVID-19 case was last present on site, activities the case completed and location where activities were performed. With this information the employer will determine which, if any, employees were exposed to COVID-19.

The employer will need to report ASAP to City of Berkeley, information on all confirmed cases and close contacts involved in exposure. Please go to <https://cdph.force.com/SPOT/s/IntakeForm> for initial incident reporting. This form will require input of basic information such as location and point of contact. Once this initial information is submitted by the employer, City of Berkeley will email a link for the employer to directly input details of the cases and contacts into the SPOT database.

Employers may also consider instituting a policy informing employees that if they are confirmed to have COVID-19, the employee will be requested to provide a list of other employees with whom they had

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close contact during the exposure dates. The content and need for such policies will vary given the nature of the workplace and its location.

Within one business day from when the employer knows there was an exposure, employers should communicate to the identified close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, while maintaining the affected employee's confidentiality. Employers should be particularly careful not to disclose the affected employee's name. Notification from employer to close contacts must be in provided in writing in an easily understandable format. Employers may use the attached letter template to notify the close contacts of the potential exposure and require them to be on home quarantine for 10 days after their last date of exposure to the ill employee.

Per [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Standards](#) employers must "offer COVID-19 testing at no cost to employees during their working hours to all employees who had potential COVID-19 exposure in the workplace."

Please note that a negative test is not a clearance to return to work. In most cases a close contact without symptoms must remain on home quarantine for 10 days after their last date of exposure to the ill employee and continue to monitor for symptoms for the 14 day incubation period.

Employers should plan for adequate staffing needs to support workers who should remain at home for the duration of their quarantine period. These employees are at a higher risk for COVID-19 due to their close contact with the ill employee.

It is important that employers do not use testing to impermissibly discriminate against employees who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 (such as preventing them from resuming work after they can do so in a manner consistent with public health and safety). An employee who is currently infectious and completing their isolation period should not be allowed to return to work. We know that PCR tests can remain positive long after an individual is no longer infectious, proof of a negative test should not be required prior to returning to the workplace after documented COVID infection.

2. Instructions: Possible Worksite Outbreak with ≥ 3 confirmed cases

If an employer learns that there are ≥ 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19, please contact Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Program (CD Control) immediately (within 1 business day) at 510-981-5292 or email cobcd@cityofberkeley.info with the subject line "Berkeley Worksite Exposure – possible outbreak".

To help expedite your Outbreak response, please be prepared to provide the following information and documentation to City of Berkeley Public Health:

- **Case and Contact information** will be entered by employer into SPOT database (COB will send the employer a link with instructions upon report of an Outbreak)
- A **site map** with the workspace of the cases and/or symptomatic employees noted

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Once BPH receives this information you will be contacted by the assigned investigator. The investigator will review the information provided, conduct interviews as needed, and provide the employer with guidance on next steps. This may include site closure. BPH's recommendations for closures will be made on a case-by-case basis.

[Assembly Bill 685:](#)

Requires employers to notify employees who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and to report workplace outbreaks to the local health department.

Per [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Standards](#) employers must immediately institute testing if there is an outbreak:

“(b) COVID-19 testing. (1) The employer shall make COVID-19 testing available at no cost to its employees within the exposed group, during employees’ paid time, except: (A) Employees who were not present at the workplace during the relevant 14-day period(s) under subsection (a). (B) Employees who were fully vaccinated before section 3205.1 became applicable and who do not have COVID-19 symptoms; and (C) For COVID-19 cases who did not develop COVID-19 symptoms after returning to work pursuant to subsections 3205(c)(11)(A) or (B), no testing is required for 90 days after the initial onset of COVID-19 symptoms or, for COVID-19 cases who never developed symptoms, 90 days after the first positive test. Once close contacts are identified, employers should communicate to these employees that they may have been potentially exposed to COVID-19, while maintaining the affected employee’s confidentiality. Employers should be particularly careful not to disclose the affected employee’s name. Employers may use the attached letter template to notify the close contacts of the potential exposure and require them to be on home quarantine for 10 days after their last date of exposure to the ill employee.”

3. Instructions: Cleaning Recommendations

Employers are encouraged to institute regular housekeeping practices, which include cleaning and disinfecting frequently used equipment, and other elements of the work environment, where possible. Employees should regularly do the same in their assigned work areas.

- Break/lunchroom areas should be cleaned at least once per day. Employees performing cleaning should be issued proper personal protective equipment (“PPE”), such as nitrile, latex, or vinyl gloves and gowns, as recommended by the CDC.
- Any trash collected at the jobsite must be emptied frequently by someone wearing nitrile, latex, or vinyl gloves.

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- Employers should ensure that hand sanitizer dispensers are always filled. Frequently touched items (door handles, toilet seats) will be disinfected frequently.
- OSHA has indicated that a reliable report that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 does not typically require an employer to perform special cleaning or decontamination of work environments, unless those environments are visibly contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. Notwithstanding this, employers are encouraged to clean those areas of the jobsite that a confirmed-positive individual may have contacted and will do so before employees can access that work space again.
- Employers will ensure that any disinfection shall be conducted using one of the following:
 - Common EPA-registered household disinfectant;
 - Alcohol solution with at least 60% alcohol; or
 - Diluted household bleach solutions (if appropriate for the surface).
- Employers are encouraged to maintain Safety Data Sheets of all disinfectants used on site.

Resources:

List of EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting your Facility

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Mar 2021

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

4. Instructions: Vaccinated Employees

Fully vaccinated is defined as a person who is at least two weeks out from last vaccination in series (depending on vaccination received could be second dose of 2 dose series or 1 dose of 1 dose vaccination). For fully vaccinated employees of non-healthcare settings with no COVID-like symptoms; there is no need to quarantine following an exposure. It is recommended fully vaccinated employees continue to participate in routine screening testing (if present) or after a known exposure in the worksite.

Fully vaccinated employees of non-healthcare congregate settings and other high-density workplaces (e.g., meat and poultry processing and manufacturing plants) with no COVID-like symptoms do not need to quarantine following an exposure; however testing following an exposure and through routine workplace screening programs (if present) is still recommended.

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5. Instructions: Previously Positive

Individuals who have recovered from an active COVID infection, are within 3 months of the infection and do not have any symptoms, do not have to quarantine following an exposure to an active case. However if someone develops COVID symptoms within 3 months from their first infection, the individual should be evaluated by a healthcare provider, and tested if indicated.

6. Template: Letter from Employer to Employees Potentially Exposed to COVID-19

This letter template is to be used on the business's letterhead.

Dear [Employee Name],

[Business Name] has been notified that one of our employees has been diagnosed with COVID-19. We conducted an investigation to determine co-workers who may have had close contact with the confirmed-positive employee. As such, you have been identified as an employee who may have been exposed to this virus between [Exposure Dates]. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (less than 6 feet apart for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or longer over a 24 hour period) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Please see below instructions regarding work exclusion, sick leave and testing.

Work Exclusion

Until further notice you are excluded from physically coming to work as to help prevent potential spread of the virus. If you remain without symptoms, you be on home quarantine for 10 days after your last date of exposure to the ill employee. You should continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days after the last date of exposure to the positive employee. Please know we are offering telework opportunities where possible and will work with you to make this transition smooth. Contact [contact information] to determine if teleworking is an option for you.

Note: If teleworking is not an option for your business, please outline any other options that may be available to the employee here

Sick Leave & Pay

Please note if you are unable to telework, or if you become ill, you will be able to use your sick leave [insert link or attachment to relevant worksite policies as applicable]

Per the U.S. Department of Labor, in general, if you are either a private employer with fewer than 500 employees or a covered public sector employer, employees quarantined by a healthcare provider may take

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up to two weeks or 80 hours of paid leave at higher or regular rate or minimum wage. Paid leave is capped at specific maximum amounts per worker. For more information go to www.dol.gov.

During this time if you experience symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, coughing or shortness of breath), please inform human resources at [contact information] and contact your health care provider. [Business Name] will keep all medical information confidential and will only disclose it on a need-to-know basis, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, we are required to maintain the confidentiality of any medical information we receive, including the name of any affected employee.

Returning to Work

You may return to work upon clearance from your corresponding local health jurisdiction in combination with following our worksite health and safety policies [insert link or attachment to relevant worksite policies as applicable].

Testing

Please contact your health care provider to inquire about testing. If you do not have a health care provider or need to be connected to a testing site please visit <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/covid19-testing/#where>

If at any point you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, night sweats, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, muscle or body aches, headaches, confusion, or loss of sense of taste/smell), contact your doctor immediately.

If you have any immediate questions or concerns, you may contact [Employer contact information]. For more information on COVID-19, visit the City of Berkeley website at <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/covid-19/>.

Sincerely,

[Employer Name]

[Title]

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7. Resources: Employer/Employee

- COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions
<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID19FAQs.html>
- Employment Development Department (Disability Insurance & Paid Family Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance)
https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm
- Labor & Workforce Development Agency
<https://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/>
- Department of Industrial Relations, Labor Commissioner's Office
[https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\)-Information.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)-Information.htm)
- Department of Fair Employment and Housing
<https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/covid-19-resources-and-guidance/>
- OnwardCA
<https://onwardca.org/>
- Alameda County Workforce Development Board: Resource Toolkit *This link doesn't work*
<http://acphd.org/media/585203/acwdb-covid-19-all-services-toolkit-for-workers-businesses-and-job-seekers.pdf>
- CDC Worker Safety & Response
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/index.html>

8. Resources: Testing

- City of Berkeley Testing Information
<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/covid19-testing/>
- CA.gov list of COVID testing laboratories

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<https://testing.covid19.ca.gov/covid-19-testing-task-force-laboratory-list/>

- Color lab

<https://www.color.com/covid-testing-programs-for-employers>

- Optum lab

<https://www.optum.com/business/resources/library/worksite-strategy-covid-19.html>

9. Other Resources

- Alameda County COVID-19 Food Distribution

<http://www.acgov.org/maps/food-services.htm>