

## **Guidance to Departments for COVID-19 Potential Worksite Exposure (Revised 8/4/2021)**

### ***What to do when your employee receives a positive COVID-19 Diagnosis.***

*\*This protocol was developed in partnership with the Public Health for Ramsey County worksites. Please note that some worksites because of the nature of their work (like the Ramsey County Care Center or the Ramsey County Correctional Facility) may need to comply with additional state and federal requirements.*

### **You learn that an employee has been diagnosed with confirmed COVID-19.**

A supervisor may learn that one of their employees received a diagnosis of COVID-19. Because testing is readily available, employees should confirm diagnosis by being tested. Employees are required to disclose if they are confirmed to have COVID-19 to their supervisor or manager.

1. Inform the employee to stay home and not to come back until safe to do so. If the employee is feeling well enough to work from home and is able to do so, direct the employee to work from home. If the employee is not well enough to work from home, the employee should use leave time. Employees should first use PEPEL leave if they have a balance remaining. For more guidance about the type of leave that applies, see [HR Guidance for Exposure to COVID-19 and Leave Time](#).
2. If the employee was exposed to COVID-19 as a result of work activities, supervisors must file a "[First Report of Injury](#)" via RamseyNet, or contact [your department's benefits representative](#).
3. If the employee was in the workplace, identify the locations the employee was working while they were symptomatic and 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms to determine if they were in close contact to any individuals (employees or customers). Close contact is defined by the CDC as *within 6 feet or less for more than 15 minutes*. This is cumulative. For example, an employee spends five minutes with another employee on a break, then 10 minutes at lunch and five minutes at their afternoon break; this is considered to be 15 minutes or more.
4. Contact employees directly who were identified as having close contact. (Templates are contained at the of this document.) Recommend they get tested for COVID-19.
  - **If the employee who had close contact is vaccinated**, the employee should:
    - Voluntarily disclose they have been vaccinated to their supervisor and show visual proof; at this time, the supervisor does not need to maintain a copy on file.
    - Monitor for symptoms and wear a mask indoors in the workplace for 14 days or until they test negative. (Note: If there is a mask mandate in place in Ramsey County, all employees must adhere to the mask mandate regardless of

vaccination status).

- It is strongly recommended the employee get tested for COVID-19 within 3-5 days after exposure. The employee does not have to quarantine unless they become symptomatic or test positive, at which time, the employee should stay home and quarantine.
- **If the employee who was in close contact is unvaccinated**, the employee should:
  - Stay home, quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. The default is to have the employee work from home if at all possible. For employees who generally cannot do their job from home, determine if there are any training materials you can provide to employees during this time so that employees who are not symptomatic may be able to continue to work.
  - It is strongly recommended that the employee get tested within 3-5 days after exposure.
  - The employee may return to work after day 7 if the employee tested negative for COVID-19 and they remain asymptomatic. The employee may return after day 10 if they were not tested but asymptomatic. The employee should provide the supervisor with a visual of the negative lab test result. The supervisor does not need to maintain this document for their records.

*Note: The date of the last known exposure is considered to be day 0. Day 1 starts the following day.*

5. If the employee was not in the workplace 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, there is no need to determine if other employees were within close contact. Any employees at the worksite may have potential exposure and should be notified. (See the template at the end of this document).
6. Close off areas that the employee frequented if possible, for at least 24 hours. If not possible, supervisors should disinfect work areas and other visited areas. Property Management or the cleaning service your work area uses is responsible for cleaning common areas. If it's been longer than 7 days since the ill employee was last in the workplace, it is not necessary to go beyond routine cleaning procedures.
7. Notify the following individuals:
  - **Those who had close contact** as noted above (see template at the end of this document);
  - **Those who had potential exposure but not close contact** that an employee has COVID-19 and they should monitor for symptoms (see template at the end of this document);
  - **Those who have responsibility for safety, compliance or tracing exposure in the workplace;** email the following citing that an employee tested positive for COVID-19, the employee's work location, whether the employee was in close contact with employees or others and confirmation that you reached out to those individuals to notify them of the protocol to follow.
    - Ramsey County's Public Health Incident Command: [PH-ICSCOVID-19-Incident-Commander@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:PH-ICSCOVID-19-Incident-Commander@co.ramsey.mn.us).

- HR Staff at [COVID19HumanResources@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:COVID19HumanResources@co.ramsey.mn.us).
- Your Department Head.
- Property Management – Jean Krueger at [Jean.Krueger@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:Jean.Krueger@co.ramsey.mn.us).

**Reminder:** Supervisors, managers and directors must not name the employee who has COVID-19 in your notifications to employees or Incident Command UNLESS you have specific authorization from the employee to do so. Please follow the template language at the end of this document.

### **Employees with COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance**

Employees may return to work, if it has been:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving **\*\*Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.**

Employees should follow their medical provider’s guidance if it differs from the above.

In all cases, employees must present a doctor’s note to return to work.

## Template message to send to staff when a co-worker has COVID-19 to inform them of potential exposure, but not close contact

Dear (department/division) staff,

I'm writing to inform you that a member of our staff was confirmed by their health care provider to have COVID-19.

For privacy reasons we cannot share additional details, but we want to assure you that we are closely following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health. It has been determined that you are at minimal/low risk because you were not in close contact with the diagnosed employee.

We are working to ensure we provide as safe a work environment as we possibly can, so that we can continue to provide essential government services. Please continue to follow our worksite practice:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Wash your hands
- Practice social distancing
- Don't touch your face; we strongly encourage you to wear a mask if you are unvaccinated or if the County is deemed to be at substantial risk for the spread of COVID-19
- Get vaccinated if you can – vaccinations remain the best protection against the spread of COVID-19.

Contact your supervisor if you have any concerns or if you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19 such as fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of smell or taste, headache, sore throat, or chills and contact your medical provider.

For additional information on COVID-19, visit the [MDH website](#) or [CDC website](#) or contact the MDH COVID-19 Hotline at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

You can also visit the [FAQs for employees on Ramsey County's website](#). The County's [Employee Assistance Program](#) provides free, confidential consultation on matters involving your personal or professional life.

I know this is a stressful time for you and your family. We are taking all necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of our workforce, following all guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Minnesota Department of Health. We will continue to keep you updated as we have new information.

Thank you,

(Department Director, Division Leader, Supervisor)

## **Template message for staff when a co-worker was in close contact to someone in the workplace with COVID-19**

Note: While this letter provides important information to anyone who was identified as a close contact, speaking directly with those in close contact about this guidance will be helpful before sending the letter.

Dear (department/division) staff,

I'm writing to inform you that a member of our staff was confirmed by their health care provider to have COVID-19.

It has been determined that you were in close contact with the individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 and may be at risk for contracting COVID-19. Please follow the instructions below:

### **If you are vaccinated:**

- Voluntary inform your supervisor know you are vaccinated and show proof of vaccination. Visual inspection of your vaccination record is appropriate. At this time, Ramsey County is not collecting or maintaining proof of vaccination.
- We strongly encourage you to get tested between days 3-5.
- Monitor symptoms for 14 days. We ask that you wear a mask indoors until you receive a negative test result; or the 14 days have expired, and you remain asymptomatic.
- If you become symptomatic, stay home and let your supervisor know. We encourage you to get tested or talk with your medical provider if you have been tested.

### **If you are not vaccinated:**

- Stay home for 10 days and monitor for symptoms. You may need to use leave time if you are not able to work from home.
- We strongly encourage you to get tested between days 3-5. If you receive a negative test, you may return after day 7.
- If you become symptomatic, continue to stay home and let your supervisor know. We encourage you to get tested or talk with your medical provider if you have been tested.

Note: In either case, the date of last exposure is considered day 0.

We are working to ensure we provide as safe a work environment as we possibly can, so that we can continue to provide essential government services. Please continue to follow our worksite practice:

- Stay home if you are sick and isolate from your family members where possible to prevent spread.
- Wash your hands.
- Practice social distancing.
- Don't touch your face; we strongly encourage you to wear a mask or to comply with any mask mandates in place at the County at the time of receiving this letter.
- Get vaccinated if you can – vaccinations remain the best protection against the spread of COVID-19.

Contact your supervisor if you have any concerns or if you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19 such as fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of smell or taste, headache, sore throat, or chills and contact your medical provider.

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I know this is a stressful time for you and your family. We are taking all necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of our workforce, following all guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Minnesota Department of Health. We will continue to keep you updated as we have new information.

Thank you,

(Department director, division leader, supervisor)