

Covid-19 Risk Management Reminders and Guidance

PRIMEX³ RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Covid fatigue is real! And for Primex³ Members on the front lines of the pandemic it's a real challenge to stay on top of the many best practices to keep employees safe and to maintain operational readiness. Employees and employers alike are tired of the "new normal" but now, more than ever perhaps, is a time to buckle down and reaffirm those best practices as positive Covid-19 numbers in the nation and in our state are rising.



Employers can prevent and slow the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace by reviewing and reaffirming proven strategies to slow the spread in an effort to prevent and reduce transmission among employees and to maintain operations. The following are important recommendations to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in your workplace.

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms should notify their supervisor and stay home. They should contact their healthcare provider about getting tested.
- Employees should not return to work until cleared by a healthcare provider or 10-days from last symptom.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow quarantine guidance.

Quarantine Guidance - Isolation applies to people who are sick, and quarantine applies to people who have been potentially exposed. They both mean to stay home away from others, but the time required for each differs.

Essential critical infrastructure employees may be permitted to work during the quarantine period if all of the following criteria are met:

- The employee is not exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
- The employee is not a household contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- The employee is deemed essential to the functioning of the business and substantial business impact would be experienced if the employee does not work in person;
- The employee cannot conduct essential operations remotely;
- The employee self-quarantines for all other purposes other than reporting to work;
- The employee wears a mask, maintains at least 6 feet of separation from other employees and customers, and participates in daily health screening.

Isolation and Quarantine Summary - This matrix is helpful when making a determination on all employee quarantine related matters.

	Household Contact (highest risk) to someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in past 14 days	Non-Household Close Contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in past 14 days	Traveled outside NH, VT, ME, MA, CT, RI or by cruise ship	Traveled within NH, VT, MA, CT, RI or ME or No Travel
New or unexplained symptom of COVID-19	Isolate, Get Tested, If negative, Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of exposure (no exceptions)	Isolate, Get Tested, if negative, Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of exposure (unless essential employee as outlined above)	Isolate, Get Tested, if negative, Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of travel (unless essential travel – see definition below)	Isolate, Get Tested, if negative then person can return to normal activities once without fever for at least 24 hours (off fever reducing medications) and other symptoms improving
Asymptomatic	Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of exposure (no exceptions), Get tested	Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of exposure (unless essential employee as outlined above), Get tested	Self-Quarantine for 14 days from last day of travel (unless essential travel – see definition below)	No restrictions

- **Positive Test for COVID-19: Self-Isolate**
- **Essential Travel:** *Essential travel includes personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for food, beverage or medication or for work. Employees who travel outside of the New England states for personal or leisure reasons cannot rely on this exemption.*

Conduct daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) of employees before they enter the workplace. The purpose of this screening tool is to minimize workplace transmission of COVID-19 by identifying employees’ potential exposures and responding with appropriate measures, which may include, for example, focused follow-up questions, working from home, temporary leave from the workplace, testing and/or fit-for-duty certification.


- If implementing in-person health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully. Employers may use social distancing, barrier or partition controls, or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the screener.
- Maintain confidentiality of medical records from health checks.

- To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, make employee health screenings as private as possible.
- As an alternative, there are health questionnaire Apps that can be downloaded and used by employees.

Separate sick employees: Employees who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors, and sent home. Have a procedure in place for the safe transport of an employee who becomes sick while at work. If the sick employees are waiting for their safe transport identify a space in your facility that can be used as an isolation space while the sick employee waits.

Sample Employee Health Screening Questionnaire:

Click here for a fillable Health Screening Questionnaire PDF from the Primex³ website.



Sample COVID-19 Health Screening Questionnaire

Date: _____

Name: _____

Department: _____

The purpose of this screening tool is to minimize workplace transmission of COVID-19 by identifying employees' potential exposures and responding with appropriate measures, which may include, for example, focused follow-up questions, working from home, temporary leave from the workplace, testing and/or fit-for-duty certification. To assist with these measures, the New Hampshire Bureau of Infectious Disease Control has developed an Isolation and Quarantine Summary for employers, which may serve as a situational assessment tool, at page four of the following (effective August 27, 2020): <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>

	YES	NO
1. I have one or more flu-like symptoms that I do not normally experience in connection with a pre-existing health condition, and which are causing me to feel unwell. Such symptoms may include, but are not necessarily limited to, unusual headache, fatigue, runny nose, muscle aches, sore throat, cough, fever, shortness of breath, change in sense of taste or smell, and chills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. A person residing or staying in my household has one or more symptoms described in #1 causing them to feel unwell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I answered no to #1 and #2, but I, or someone residing or staying in my household, did have symptoms within the last 72 hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have had contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 calendar days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I have had contact with an individual who is experiencing flu symptoms such as those indicated in #1, but has not been tested for COVID-19 within the last 14 calendar days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I have traveled outside of NH, ME, MA, CT, RI, or VT, within the last 14 days or I have returned from international travel or travel on a cruise ship during that period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you have a fever (over 100 degrees) or are you feeling feverish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This form is a guidance document provided as a sample. Use of the form is not required by Primex³ in connection with membership, coverage or services. The implementation of workplace screening is a local policy decision that should be based on consideration of current executive orders, public health guidelines and operational needs. The form may be modified; however, we would strongly recommend adherence to any applicable executive orders and public health guidelines. This is a general form. Certain occupations may be subject to different screening inquiries and procedures. To that point, for example, questions 4 and 5 may focus more appropriately on "unprotected contact" for public safety workers using PPE.

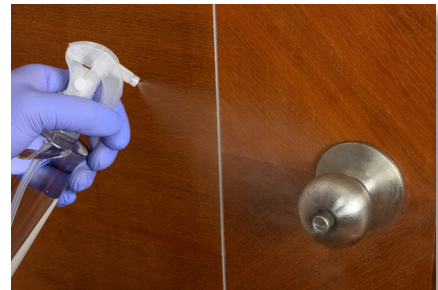
Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work. Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace and that includes implementing measures to control the hazards related to COVID-19. Use appropriate combinations of controls including engineering controls, administrative controls, work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect workers from Covid-19 hazards.

Engineering Controls

- Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g. drive-through, partitions)
- Deliver products through curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Increase ventilation rates and the percentage of outdoor air in your HVAC systems. Engage with your HVAC maintenance provider to learn about increasing your ventilation in your facility.

Administrative Controls

- Implement flexible worksites (e.g. telework)
- Implement flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts)
- Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)



Work Practices

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
- Do not share phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Require staff wear **face masks (face covers)** to control the spread of respiratory droplets in the workplace. If needed, make masks available to staff. Face masks work!
- Provide disposable gloves for those operations where customer contact is anticipated.
- Check the CDC Website routinely for Workplace PPE Guidance.

Implement basic infection control measures - Promote frequent and thorough hand washing by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. In addition, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers, too, but especially if soap and running water are not immediately available

at a workplace or worksite. It is also important to train employees on respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes. Some other basic infection control measures include:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations.
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene and proper hand washing.

Take action if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 infection:

In most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility. Close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person and disinfect them. Ideally, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas. To disinfect surfaces, use products that kill the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) when used according to the label directions.

- Always wear gloves when you are cleaning and disinfecting.
- You may need to wear additional PPE depending on the setting and disinfectant product you are using. For each product you use, consult and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.



Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and may need to take additional precautions:

- Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality.
- Follow the State Public Health guidelines for community-related exposure and instruct potentially exposed employees to stay home for 14 days, telework if possible, and self-monitor for symptoms.
- To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community such as wearing a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

Educate employees about steps they can take to protect themselves at work and at home:

- Encourage employees to follow any new policies or procedures related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices:

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that your policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and with existing state and federal workplace laws.
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services.

Have Contingencies – Plan for absenteeism spikes. Increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children are likely to increase. This could substantially impact operations from snow plowing to public safety.

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher-than-usual absenteeism.
- Review mutual aid plans and inter-agency agreements.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.



Public meetings and gatherings:

- Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- Cancel, adjust, or postpone large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person in accordance with state and local regulations and guidance.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces continuing to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart and wear cloth face coverings.

TAKE ACTION NOW TO FIGHT COVID FATIGUE!

Keep your employees and residents safe, maintain your operations and manage the risks. For more information on how to best address the management of Covid-19 in your workplace, please contact your risk management consultant today.

For more information, please contact your Primex³ Risk Management Consultant at 800-698-2364 or email RiskManagement@nhprimex.org.