



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE TESTING POSITIVE OR BEING EXPOSED TO COVID-19

At the end of this document is [a grid to help you know what actions you need to take](#) for a variety of employee illness scenarios. We recommend working with your human resources personnel

Please note: this guidance is not intended for health care personnel. This guidance is not all inclusive. If you have additional questions, we recommend consulting with your human resources or legal departments.

I HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHO TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Do I need to contact La Crosse County Health Department about this employee?

No, you do not need to contact us. You will need to follow the Reduce Transmission Among Employees guidance from [CDC](#). This section discusses what to do with employees experiencing symptoms and those that have tested positive.

Do I need to shut down my facility if the employee was at the facility while contagious?

No, you do not need to shut down, but you do need to clean which might mean closing areas of the workplace for about 24 hours. See "[How do I need to clean my facility...](#)" below for more information.

What steps should I take after an employee of my facility tests positive for COVID-19?

- Follow [CDC guidelines](#) for cleaning your facility. When possible, do not reopen until cleaning has been completed.
- Do not allow employee testing positive or other employees with close contact to come to work

Do I need to notify customers or clients?

If the employee with the positive test had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with any customers or clients, those individuals should be notified. La Crosse County Health Department will work with you to do this. This is required under statute 252.03(1).

Does a business with a positive employee need to notify the general public?

No.

How do I need to clean my facility after an employee tested positive for COVID-19 and was at work while contagious?

If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 and worked while contagious, it is recommended to thoroughly clean this space using [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) effective against COVID-19. According to CDC, the following cleaning and disinfecting should be performed in your facility:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
 - Companies do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off affected areas.
- **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area.
- **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the person** who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines.
- [Vacuum the space](#) if needed. Use vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particular air (HEPA) filter, if available.

- Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
 - Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
 - Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment.

When can an employee with a positive COVID-19 test return to work?

Employees with a positive test may return to work when they meet *all of* the following criteria:

- They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
- Their respiratory symptoms are improving
- It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset

OR

- If the person had no symptoms, they may return 10 days after they were tested

We recommend against requiring employees to have a negative COVID-19 test before returning to work. People with COVID-19 may have positive test results for weeks after they recover but are not contagious after they meet the symptom criteria above. Requiring a negative test places an unnecessary burden on the employee and may prevent you from providing services due to extended employee absences.

Does an employee need a clearance letter from Public Health before they can return to work?

No, employees do not need a clearance letter before returning to work. Those who need a letter can visit our website at lacrossecounty.org/covid19.

What if the employee diagnosed with COVID-19 is asymptomatic? When can they come back to work?

Employees that are asymptomatic but had a positive test or diagnosis for COVID-19 should:

- Self-isolate and monitor their health for 10 days.
- If they have no symptoms, they may return to work 10 days after testing positive
- If they develop symptoms during the 10 days, they should extend isolation precautions for at least 10 days from the date of symptom onset and must meet the following criteria before returning to work:
 - They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - Their respiratory symptoms are improving
 - It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset



I HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHO HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

When can an employee that has had close contact to someone COVID-19 return to work?

[Close contact](#) is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a prolonged period (15 minutes or more) starting from 48 hours before illness onset, or having direct exposure to coughs, sneezes, or bodily fluids. The 15 minutes does not need to be continuous (e.g., three 5-minute periods would count). Employees that have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person may return to work when they meet the following criteria:

- Self-isolated for 14 days from last contact with a sick person and have had no symptoms

OR

- If symptoms develop during the 14 day self-isolation period, employees must stay home and avoid others until all of the following have been met:
 - They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - Their respiratory symptoms are improving
 - It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset

Employees do not need a clearance letter before returning to work.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 AND THE WORKPLACE

Should I require my employees to be tested for COVID-19 before they can work?

No. La Crosse County recommends against requiring employees to be tested before being able to work. A test only tells us if a person has COVID-19 on the day they are tested. **Furthermore, La Crosse County does NOT require negative COVID-19 test result(s) to return to work after testing positive.** This is because people with COVID-19 may have positive test results for weeks after they recover but are not contagious after they meet the isolation criteria. Requiring documentation or proof of a test puts an unnecessary burden on staff and delays when an employee is able to start work. As always, any employee who is sick or has symptoms should not be at work.

What should an employer do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their facility?

Employers should:

- Allow employees to work remotely, communicate virtually, and limit in-person meetings and gatherings
- Stagger work schedules and rearrange workspaces to allow physical distancing to be maintained
- Provide employees proper PPE (gloves, masks, etc as defined by job duties and risk of exposure), handwashing supplies, and hand sanitizer
- Have policies written for hygiene, cleaning, and protective measures
- Train employees on:
 - [their employee illness policy](#),
 - what the symptoms for COVID-19 are

- what to do if they test positive,
- what to do if they were exposed,
- the importance of frequent hand washing or sanitizing
- the importance of heightened cleaning and sanitizing protocols
- the importance of physical distancing
- when to wear PPE and
- the proper way to wear PPE.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19 that I should have my employees self-monitor for prior to coming to work?

1. Cough
2. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
3. Fever ≥ 100.4 F
4. Chills
5. Muscle pain
6. Sore throat
7. New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all-inclusive. [Other less common symptoms](#) have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Will my business be contacted if one of my employees tests positive?

Our department may not contact you if you have had an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, due to capacity or surges of cases. If you are notified by an employee that they have tested positive for COVID-19, we ask that you follow the guidance provided in this document for next steps and best practices.

Regardless of contact from our department, you should notify employees who were exposed and are close contacts so they can begin their quarantine period as needed. See more guidance from the FDA here: [What to do if you have a COVID-19 confirmed worker](#).

If our department does contact you, we may also ask for the names, addresses, or phone numbers for employees who had close contact with the employee who tested positive. You are required to comply with these requests under statute 252.03(1).

Due to HIPAA, it is important not to share any unnecessary information on the positive person with other employees from the workplace, but instead provide general information about the employees' exposure and guidance provided by the health department to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. Only discuss with those employees whose exposure has been deemed as a close contact.

What is the definition of close contact?

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a prolonged period (15 minutes or more) starting from 48 hours before illness onset, or having direct exposure to coughs, sneezes, or bodily fluids. The 15 minutes does not need to be continuous (e.g., three 5-minute periods would count). Although, wearing a cloth face covering reduces the risk of transmission, it does not completely remove the exposure risk when in close contact and does not change the quarantine requirements for close contacts.

When and how should I clean my facility?

At this time it is strongly encouraged that all businesses clean on a more frequent basis and it is recommended that all high-touch surfaces are cleaned every 2 hours or after every user when possible. The CDC has information on [cleaning in a facility](#).

How can La Crosse County help if we think someone is coming to work sick?

It is, overall, a bad business practice for the employer to allow any person to work when sick and goes against all the CDC's COVID-19 guidance. We are not performing enforcement on businesses that are allowing people to work when

sick; however, if there is a confirmed communicable disease identified for one of the employees, enforcement may be ordered.

Does the business with an outbreak need to notify the general public?

In extreme cases where a large amount of people working in an establishment test positive and close contacts are not easily traceable, La Crosse County may need to notify the general public that an exposure at that business might have occurred. See how we decide [here](#).

RESOURCES:

[La Crosse County Employee Illness Agreement template for COVID-19](#) and return to work guidance

FDA Guidance: [What To Do If You Have a COVID-19 Confirmed Positive Worker or Workers Who Have Been Exposed To a Confirmed Case of COVID-19](#)

DEFINITIONS:

Asymptomatic: A person showing no symptoms.

Close Contact:

- Someone who was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person (regardless of PPE) for *15 minutes or more total – OR – direct exposure to coughs, sneezes, or other body fluids*. The 15 minutes does not need to be continuous (e.g., three 5-minute periods would count)
- Can occur starting 48 hours before positive test or illness onset, whichever occurred first
- Although, wearing a mask or cloth face covering reduces the risk of transmission, it does not completely remove the exposure risk when in close contact and does not change the quarantine requirements for close contacts.

Isolation: To separate a sick person with COVID-19 from people who are not sick. People can end isolation when the following criteria are met:

1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications)
2. Their other symptoms have improved
3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset

Self-monitor: An employee shall monitor for the following symptoms daily prior to reporting to work. If an employee has any of these symptoms, they shall stay home, and immediately report to employer:

1. Cough
2. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
3. Fever $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$
4. Chills
5. Muscle pain
6. Sore throat
7. New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all-inclusive. [Other less common symptoms](#) have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Quarantine: To separate and restrict the movement of a person who was exposed to COVID-19 in case they become sick. Most people start their quarantine when they find out about their exposure and can end their quarantine 14 days after the last time they were with the person with COVID-19.

Notification Procedures:

Due to HIPAA rules and regulations, we will not disclose a positive case to the entire staff. After public health has interviewed the employee who tested positive, we will determine if any other employees that may have been exposed (close contact) and work with the health department to contact these individuals for quarantining.

*NOTE: There may be times when our health department is not able to contact all positive cases and close contacts. See more info above at ["Will my business be contacted if one of my employees tests positive?"](#)

If there are multiple positive employees within the workplace, this does not necessarily mean that we have a workplace outbreak. Due to community spread of COVID-19, someone can be exposed in a variety of settings beyond work. Most important to know is that every positive case is reported to the health department, and the health department will contact us if they determine through their tracing if there are workplace exposures and/or if this is a workplace outbreak. We will follow the health department's guidance and recommendations for our workers safety.

Doctor's note or Public Health release to work not needed

If an employee tests positive, public health recommends against requiring employees to have a doctor's note or a Public Health release letter to return to work, as this is an unnecessary burden during an emergency response for a communicable disease like COVID-19.

Public Health also recommends against requiring negative COVID-19 test results before returning to work. People with COVID-19 may have positive test results for weeks after they recover but are not contagious after they meet the symptom criteria above. Requiring negative tests for returning to work places an unnecessary burden on the employer and may prevent employees from providing services due to extended employee absences.

COVID-19 SCENARIOS AT THE WORKPLACE

POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RETURNING TO WORK

This guidance is not all inclusive. If you have additional questions, we recommend consulting with your human resources or legal departments.

Employee Scenario	Policy	Return to Work Requirements
A. Employee has no symptoms (asymptomatic) and has tested positive for COVID-19	<p>Do not allow employee to come to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>Employee shall stay home and monitor for symptoms. If the employee has no symptoms, they can return 10 days after they were tested.</p> <p>If during the 10 days the employee becomes symptomatic, then they must continue to stay home for at least 10 more days from the date of the symptom onset and meet all the following before returning to work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset 	<p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work</p>
B. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, but has not yet been tested	<p>Do not allow employee to come to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>Recommend employee be tested. Employee shall stay home until all of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset <p>If employee is tested, stay home until test results return. Follow Scenario D or E, depending on test results.</p>	<p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work.</p>
C. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested but not yet received the test results	<p>Do not allow employee to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>Stay home until test results return. Follow Scenario D or E, depending on test results.</p>	<p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return</p>
D. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has	<p>Employee does not have COVID-19. Follow standard employee illness protocols for returning to work.</p>	<p>A negative lab result or copy of the negative lab result is</p>

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<p>been tested and test results came back negative</p>	<p>Example: 24 hours fever-free, or 48 hours after last episode of vomiting or diarrhea, or when on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, or as approved to work by a doctor</p>	<p>not required to return to work. A doctor's note may be required to return to work based on medical condition and business illness policy.</p>
<p>E. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested and test results came back positive</p>	<p>Do not allow employee to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>Employee shall stay home until all of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset 	<p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work.</p>
<p>F. Employee had COVID-19 in the past and now has another positive test.</p>	<p>Employee may continue to work and does not need to isolate if the positive tests occurred within 12 weeks of each other. Other employees are not at risk. People who have COVID-19 can test positive for many weeks after they recover and are no longer infectious.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>G. Employee has been in close contact with someone who shows symptoms but has not been tested</p>	<p>Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>H. Employee has been in close contact with someone with symptoms who is waiting on test results</p>	<p>Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>I. Employee has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 (symptomatic or asymptomatic)</p>	<p>Do not allow employee to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>Employee must stay home for the full 14 days after last contact with person and no symptoms arise.</p> <p>If symptoms appear, stay home until all of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset 	<p>Employee may not return until the full 14-day quarantine is complete, even if the employee has a negative COVID-19 test during this time.</p> <p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work.</p>
<p>J. Employee is living with someone who tested positive for COVID-19</p>	<p>Do not allow employee to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee.</p> <p>If employee is unable to have <u>complete</u> separation from the person who had a positive COVID test: Self-quarantine for the full 14 days after the person who tested positive ends their isolation.</p>	<p>Employee may not return until the full 14-day quarantine is complete, even if the employee has a negative COVID-19 test during this time.</p>

	<p>If employee is able to completely separate from the person who tested positive: Self-quarantine for 14 days after last contact with the person who tested positive.</p> <p>If symptoms appear, stay home until all of the following apply: 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset</p>	<p>Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work.</p>
<p>K. Employee is a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 at work.</p>	<p>Do not allow employee to work. Arrange for delivering paycheck to employee. Employee shall quarantine for the full 14 days after last contact with person and no symptoms arise.</p> <p>If symptoms appear, stay home until all of the following apply: 1. They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) 2. Their other symptoms have improved 3. It has been at least 10 days since their symptom onset</p> <p>If employee is tested, stay home until test results return. Follow Scenario D or E, depending on test results.</p>	<p>Employee may not return until the full 14-day quarantine is complete, even if the employee has a negative COVID-19 test during this time. If they become symptomatic, must follow the symptom criteria for returning to work. Doctor's note or Public Health release NOT required to return to work</p>
<p>L. Employee is a close contact to someone who has been exposed to another positive person</p>	<p>Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>M. Employee lives with or cares for someone who is has been exposed to another positive person</p>	<p>Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily</p>	<p>N/A</p>

EMPLOYEE HEALTH REPORTING AGREEMENT

FOR COVID-19 Response

People with COVID-19 have a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

Employees should self-monitor daily for these COVID-19 symptoms:

1. Cough
2. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
3. Fever $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$
4. Chills
5. Muscle Pain
6. Sore throat
7. New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all inclusive. Other [less common symptoms](#) include: gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Employees must report if they are diagnosed with COVID-19:

- By a positive lab test, or
- Diagnosis from a health care provider (without lab testing)

Employees must also report COVID-19 Exposures:

- Living with a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or
- Having close contact with a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19

I understand the rules about health reporting and agree to:

1. Self-monitor prior to reporting to work each day.
2. Report symptoms, positive diagnosis or exposure to COVID-19 to the Person-in-Charge.
3. Follow the exclusions and/or restrictions that may be required of me.

I understand and agree to follow all best practices adopted by my business to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including but not limited to:

1. Communicate virtually whenever possible.
2. Limit in-person meetings and gatherings.
3. Practice frequent hand hygiene.
4. Wear PPE (cloth face coverings, masks, gloves, eye protection, etc) required by my employer.
5. Maintain social distancing with other employees, customers, and clients.
6. Follow heightened cleaning and sanitizing of workspace and equipment.

Employee Name (please print) _____

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Person in Charge Signature _____ Date _____

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WORK RULES FOR ILL EMPLOYEES

The Person-in-Charge must help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by teaching new hires and all employees the importance of not working when sick.

Exclusions and Restrictions

Employee is not allowed to work in the establishment.

	What should the employee do?	When can the employee return to work?
If you have been diagnosed and are symptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider for advice and to discuss testing. Isolate yourself in your home, and do not go out when you are sick. Practice excellent hygiene and if you have others in your home, isolate yourself in one room (if possible). Cover coughs and sneezes. Do not share personal household items. Clean your hands often. Clean all "high-touch" surfaces like doorknobs often. Monitor your symptoms and call your health care provider if symptoms worsen. 	<p>Stay home and avoid others until you have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 hours without a fever (without fever reducing medicine), your symptoms improve, AND it has been 10 days since the first day you had symptoms. <p>Employers should screen employees before allowing return to work, but should not make employees provide a negative COVID-19 test.</p>
If you have a positive COVID-19 viral test and are asymptomatic (have no symptoms)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home. Monitor your health for fever, cough, and shortness of breath for 10 days. Call your health care provider if symptoms worsen. 	<p>Asymptomatic individuals with lab-confirmed COVID-19 should remain in isolation until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 days have passed since the collection date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms. <p>NOTE: patients who develop COVID-19 symptoms during this period should extend isolation precautions for at least 10 days from the date of symptom onset (see above).</p>
<p>If you may have been a close contact exposed to a person with COVID-19 but are not sick</p> <p><i>Close contact is defined as closer than 6 feet, for 15 minutes or more total – OR – direct exposure to coughs, sneezes, or other body fluids</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home. Do not go to work, and avoid public spaces for 14 days. Monitor your health for fever, cough, and shortness of breath for 14 days after your last contact with the sick person. 	<p>14 days after their exposure, if they do not develop any COVID-19 symptoms.</p> <p>Employer should not require a negative test to return to work, nor does a negative test result exclude the person from completing a 14 day quarantine.</p> <p>NOTE: patients who develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive during this period should extend isolation precautions for at least 10 days from the date of symptom onset (see above).</p>

Employees with no known exposure to COVID-19, not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and have not tested positive for COVID-19 may work unrestricted as long as all best business practices are followed.

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