

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE FAQ'S | Human Resources 2022

Sometimes, despite a person's best efforts to protect themselves from an exposure, an employee may fall ill to COVID-19. The City of Spokane is following guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Spokane Regional Health District in its response to COVID-19. ***This guidance is intended for non-public safety employees. For public safety, please contact the department's COVID Point of Contact.**

I TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, NOW WHAT?

Any employee who tests positive for coronavirus must contact their supervisor AND the HR COVID Response team at erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org. If at work, mask up and isolate away from others immediately. Make arrangements to go home.

Once notified, the HR COVID Response Team will take the following steps:

- ✓ Reach out to the infected employee.
- ✓ Take note of important dates –
 - Date of positive test?
 - When did symptoms begin?
 - Last day at work?
- ✓ Compile a list of employees who may be identified as close contacts of the infected employee. (A **close contact** is anybody within six feet for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period and/or shared a vehicle.)
- ✓ Determine return to work date. Send FMLA/OJI email (if applicable) to direct supervisor and payroll clerk.
- ✓ Notify close contacts of possible exposure. Offer instruction and answer any questions.
- ✓ Send *Notice to Worksite* email to supervisor. This notice is to be posted in a highly visible location at the worksite.

CAN I WORK IF I HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT?

Close contacts **may remain at work**, if:

- You are UP TO DATE on your COVID-19 vaccines. (You are UP TO DATE when you have received all vaccine doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you.) and/or,
- You have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, completed isolation, and recovered.

While employees who fit these criteria are allowed to keep working, they are also required to monitor for symptoms for ten days from exposure date and it is recommended that they practice social distancing, consider wearing a mask, and follow hand hygiene and sanitation protocols.

If you are a close contact and **do not meet the criteria for remaining at work**, you will be instructed to self-quarantine for five days from exposure. Testing on day five is recommended. Employees returning to work after five days must remain asymptomatic and continue monitoring for symptoms. It is also recommended that they practice social distancing and consider wearing a mask through day ten. Employees in this category should not ride in the same vehicle as others.

WILL EMPLOYEES BE AWARE OF WHO TESTED POSITIVE?

No. The ADA prohibits the employer from sharing an employee's medical information. When the HR COVID Response Team notifies potential close contacts, they will maintain the confidentiality of the infected employee. It is inappropriate for employees to speculate, discuss or otherwise gossip about a coworker's medical condition or status.

WILL I STILL GET PAID IF I AM REQUIRED TO ISOLATE/QUARANTINE?

The HR COVID Response Team will advise and assist both infected employees and close contact(s) on eligibility and access to their reserve FMLA/OJI Sick Leave Bank to be used during recommended isolation/quarantine periods.

DO I QUALIFY FOR WORKERS COMPENSATION?

There are three criteria for a workers compensation claim to be valid in WA state as related to COVID-19:

1. Was there an increased risk or greater likelihood of contracting the condition due to the worker's occupation (such as a first responder or health care worker)?
2. If not for their job, would the worker have been exposed to the virus or contracted the condition?
3. Can the worker identify a specific source or event during the performance of his or her employment that resulted in exposure to COVID-19 (i.e., a first responder who actually treated a patient with the virus)?

WHAT IF A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD TESTED POSITIVE?

Contact the HR COVID Response Team at erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org immediately. We will work with you to determine if it is necessary for you to quarantine. We will make that determination following the same guidance as if you were a close contact at work.

I AM VACCINATED. DO I NEED TO FOLLOW THE SAME GUIDANCE?

Vaccinated employees who test positive for COVID-19 must abide by the same isolation guidance.

Vaccinated employees who have had an exposure to someone with COVID-19 are not required to quarantine, **IF they meet the following criteria:**

1. You are **UP TO DATE** with your COVID-19 vaccinations.
 - How to determine if you are **UP TO DATE** on your COVID-19 vaccinations:
 - ✓ You have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.
 - ✓ Two weeks have passed since your most recent vaccine dose.
 - ✓ If it has been less than two weeks since your most recent dose, or if you still need to get your second dose or booster, you are not fully protected. You are required to take all prevention steps until you are fully vaccinated.
2. You have not had any symptoms since your current COVID-19 exposure.

Fully vaccinated employees are required to monitor for symptoms for ten days from exposure date and it is recommended that they practice social distancing, consider wearing a mask around others, and following hand hygiene and sanitation protocols.

WHEN CAN AN INFECTED EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK?

- If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 and had symptoms, they can return to work after all of the following conditions have been met:
 - ✓ Five full days have passed since the onset of symptoms. If symptom date cannot be established, timeline will begin from positive test date.
 - ✓ At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - ✓ There has been improvement in all symptoms.
- If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms (asymptomatic), they can return to work after both of the conditions below have been met:
 - ✓ At least five days have passed since positive test.
 - ✓ They have continued to remain asymptomatic.

HOW CAN I HELP TO KEEP OUR WORKPLACE SAFE?

You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Continuing to practice safe health hygiene and proper safety measures. This includes, but is not limited to: monitoring your health, staying home if you are sick, washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer, and practicing proper safety etiquette when sneezing or coughing.
- While social distancing is no longer a basic requirement for workplaces, it is still encouraged where practicable at meetings and social gatherings.
- Departments are encouraged to conduct group meetings using hybrid formats to include virtual/telephonic options; be cognizant of the number of people in attendance for face-to-face meetings and training; and where practicable, hold face-to-face meetings and training in open, well-ventilated spaces.
- Sneeze guards or plexiglass barriers can remain in place.
- Employees and visitors who prefer to wear a mask are encouraged to continue that practice. We will continue to respect the individual needs, comforts, and choices of our team members. As a reminder, there will be zero tolerance for any incidents of hazing, shaming, or other harassment related to mask wearing.
- Should an employee require a medical accommodation for COVID-related concerns, they should contact Human Resources.

ADDITIONAL COVID-19 RESOURCES

- Spokane Regional Health District: <https://covid.srhd.org/>
- Washington State Coronavirus Response: <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>
- Washington State Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/>
- Washington State Department of Labor & Industries: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-topics/topics/coronavirus>

**If you have other questions or concerns about COVID-19,
please contact the HR COVID Response Team at erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org.**