

# COVID-19 Employee FAQ's

Human Resources | Updated 1.2023

## 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](mailto:erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org). If at work, mask up, isolate away from others and make immediate arrangements to go home.

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

- Reach out the infected employee.
- Take note of important dates –
  - What day did you test positive?
  - When did symptoms begin?
  - When were you last 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.

## 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.

## I WAS NAMED AS A CLOSE CONTACT, NOW WHAT?

- Start wearing a well-fitting mask as soon as you find out you were exposed. You should be wearing your mask any time you are around others.
- Continue wearing a mask for **10 full days**. You can develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed.
  - Day 0 is the day of your last exposure to someone with COVID-19.
  - Day 1 is the first full day after your last exposure.
- Take extra precautions if you will be around high-risk individuals and people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Monitor for Symptoms.
  - If symptoms develop. Isolate immediately and take a COVID-19 test.
- Get tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after last exposure. Even if you are asymptomatic.

Testing is not recommended if you have had COVID in the past 30 days. You may test with an antigen (at home) test if you had COVID-19 between 30-90 days ago, as PCR results may remain persistently positive even if there is not a new or active infection.

### **WHAT IF A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD TESTS POSITIVE?**

Contact the HR COVID Response Team at [erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org](mailto:erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org). We will determine course of action following the same guidance as if you are named as a close contact at work.

### **WHEN CAN AN INFECTED EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK?**

If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 and **had symptoms**, they may return to work after all of the following conditions are 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 medicine.
- 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 full days have passed since positive test date.
- Infected employee has continued to remain asymptomatic. (If symptoms begin during the initial five days, that five days starts over at onset of symptoms.)

### **Guidelines upon return to work:**

- Wear a mask through day 10 of COVID-19 infection, especially around others.
- Maintain social distancing as best as possible.
- Practice good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.

### **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.

HR COVID Response will provide:

- A Notice to Worksite sent to the supervisor to post in a highly visible location at the worksite.
- A link on the City's main SharePoint page to an updated 10-day data tracker that lists the date and department of all City employee COVID cases in the past 10 days.

## **WILL I STILL GET PAID IF I'M REQUIRED TO ISOLATE/QUARANTINE?**

HR COVID Response will advise and assist both infected employees and close contacts with eligibility determination and access of their reserve FMLA/OJI leave bank to be used during designated periods of isolation or quarantine.

## **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 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)

## **HOW CAN I HELP TO KEEP OUR WORKPLACE SAFE?**

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

- Following guidelines and safety standards set in place for positive COVID-19 cases and close contacts/exposures.
- 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 coughing or sneezing.
- 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 and plexiglass barriers may 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**

[COVID-19 Updates & Information | Spokane Regional Health District \(srhd.org\)](#)

[COVID-19 | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Coronavirus/COVID-19 Workplace Safety & Health \(wa.gov\)](#)

**If you have any other questions or concerns about COVID-19,  
please contact the HR COVID Response Team at [erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org](mailto:erahrcovidr@spokanecity.org).**