

Updated Interim Guidance for State Agencies Responding to COVID-19

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Public health experts continue to learn about SARS-CoV-2, but based on current data and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (those within about six feet for a time period of 10 minutes) via respiratory droplets. This guidance is directly relevant to State agencies with traditional workplaces, such as offices, shops, etc. Guidance regarding responses to exposure and potential exposure in congregate settings (residential facilities, prisons, etc.) differs and is directed by DPH officials in contact with the specific facility.

1. *What are the symptoms of COVID-19?*
 - a. Fever, new or worsening cough, or shortness of breath.
2. *How does COVID-19 spread?*
 - a. COVID-19 is spread by:
 - i. Close contact with a COVID-19 case: defined as
 1. being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) for a prolonged period of time (generally considered to be more than 10 minutes, though exposure risk increases as the length of time increases) within 48 hours before a COVID-19 case becomes symptomatic or
 2. having direct contact with infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on) of a COVID-19 case. and
 - ii. Touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching mouth, nose or eyes.
2. *Does wearing a face covering prevent someone from being exposed to COVID-19?*
 - a. To slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others, wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (including traditional work settings) is recommended.
 - b. See attached IDPH's guidance regarding cloth face coverings in the State workplace. Also, effective May 1, 2020, Governor Pritzker has directed all Illinoisans to cover their faces while in public where social distancing cannot be maintained.
3. *What should employees do after they receive a diagnosis or probable diagnosis?*
 - a. If the employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or potential COVID-19, initially, the employee will continue on approved time off with pay. The employee should alert their supervisor.
 - b. If the employee has tested positive for COVID-19, the employee should remain under home isolation precautions from seven days after symptoms started and until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms have improved, whichever is longer, in accordance with direction from local public health officials.

4. *As a supervisor, after learning of my employee's potential COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis, what should I do?*
 - a. Remain calm.
 - b. Review the IDPH Decision Tree for Agency Response to identify immediate, responsive actions to take.
 - c. Supervisors should take particular care to gather the following information:
 - i. When the employee first became symptomatic;
 - ii. When the employee was last on the premises;
 - iii. With whom the employee may have been in contact related to their job from 48 hours *before* becoming symptomatic until being diagnosed;
 - iv. Whether the employee was tested for COVID-19; and
 - v. If so, the results of that test.
 - d. Supervisors should work with the agency-designated COVID-19 Point Person to complete the COVID-19 Exposure Incident Report. The Incident Report should be emailed to the COVID-19 Exposure Response Statewide Team at CMS.COVID-19.IncidentReports@illinois.gov.
 - e. Supervisors should continue to exercise discretion and caution in the workplace. For instance, supervisors should continue working to ensure distance between employees who must report to work, moving workstations if an employee recently has been sick, sending home employees who feel sick, and promoting compliance with public health guidance.

5. *As a supervisor, if I learn of a case or potential case of COVID-19, who should I tell? What about employees' private medical information?*
 - a. When dealing with employee medical information, employers, including supervisors, have a general duty of confidentiality. As such, supervisors should not discuss an employee's medical information with anyone other than the supervisor's chain-of-command, the COVID-19 Point Person, HR, or Labor Relations. An employee's medical information should be kept in the utmost confidence and only discussed as needed for legitimate business reasons.
 - b. Completion and submission of the COVID-19 Exposure Incident Report will ensure that the necessary information is transmitted to the COVID-19 Exposure Response Statewide Team, comprised of agency personnel, CMS Labor Relations, CMS Bureau of Property Management, and appropriate DPH staff for prompt assessment and direction.

6. *If an agency learns one of its employees has tested positive for COVID-19, what should it do?*
 - a. Review the IDPH Decision Tree for Agency Response to identify immediate, responsive actions to take.
 - b. Completion of the COVID-19 Exposure Incident Report will ensure that the necessary information is transmitted to the COVID-19 Exposure Response Statewide Team, comprised of agency personnel, CMS Labor Relations, CMS Bureau of Property Management, and appropriate DPH staff for prompt assessment and direction.
 - c. Incident Reports should immediately be sent to CMS.COVID-19.IncidentReports@Illinois.gov for assessment and any additional direction from the COVID-19 Exposure Response Statewide Team.

- d. After assessment and direction is received from the COVID-19 Response Statewide Team, the agency will be responsible for implementing any additional direction given, which may include providing specific communication to other individuals in the workplace.
7. *If an employee fears they have been exposed to COVID-19, what should they do?*
- a. Unless an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has had known contact with a confirmed COVID case *and have COVID-like symptoms*, **the employee need not self-isolate and may continue to come to work.**
 - i. IDPH, consistent with current CDC guidelines recommends that *all Americans*, should self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-like illness.
 - ii. Like all other Illinoisans complying with Gov. Pritzker’s Executive Order, State employees should stay at home as much as possible. When they *must* leave home, they should maintain social distancing (staying 6 feet or more from other individuals) as much as possible.
 - iii. If COVID-19-like symptoms develop, they should notify their supervisor of their condition, notify their healthcare provider and seek guidance from their local public health department.
 - iv. In the event worsening signs/symptoms of COVID-19-like illness (e.g. difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest), the employee should immediately contact their physician to arrange to be safely seen for evaluation.
 - b. If an employee learns that they have had close contact (closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes) with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and have COVID-19-like symptoms, the employee should notify their employer; remain under home isolation precautions from seven days after symptoms started and until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms have improved, whichever is longer, in accordance with direction from local public health officials; and follow any additional direction the agency receives from the COVID-19 Exposure Response Statewide Team.
8. *After notification of potential exposure to a positive or presumptively positive case of COVID-19, should an employee call ahead to the doctor before going in?*
- a. If an employee learns of potential exposure to a positive or presumptively positive case of COVID-19, but is not experiencing any symptoms, they need not contact their doctor.
 - b. Employees should call their doctor or explore telemedicine options in lieu of going into a medical office.
 - c. If an employee has mild symptoms and are pregnant or immunosuppressed or are an older adult with chronic health conditions, they should consult with their physician.
 - d. If an employee becomes unwell with mild symptoms, they should isolate at home and remain home for 7 days from onset of symptoms, leaving isolation only if you have been fever-free and feeling well for 72 hours. If you have fever, cough, trouble breathing or other flu-like symptoms that are not better or are worsening after 24 to 48 hours, consult your primary healthcare provider. The symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, fever, sore throat, and shortness of breath.
 - e. If you intend to go to the doctor, call ahead to tell them about your symptoms and that you were potentially exposed to a presumptively positive case of COVID-19.

9. *What is social distancing?*
 - a. Social distancing means remaining out of community settings, avoiding public transportation (such as buses, subways, taxis, ride sharing, trains), and maintaining at least 6 feet in distance from others. Public health guidance and Gov. Pritzker's Executive Order require that people who can stay home do stay home as much as possible.

10. *What is the contact information for the Illinois Department of Public Health?*
 - a. Call the IDPH Hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email dph.sick@illinois.gov.

11. *Where can an employee or supervisor access more information about COVID-19?*
 - a. IDPH's COVID-19 [FAQ](#).
 - b. CDC Interim [Guidance](#) for Risk Assessment of COVID-19.
 - c. Monitor for illness using the HCW [Employee Monitoring Tool](#).
 - d. Evaluate for COVID-19 against the [COVID-19 Testing Decision Matrix](#).
 - e. [IDPH's 4.8.2020 Guidance](#) regarding facial coverings in public.

EXHIBIT 1

Current guidance based on community exposure (for non-critical infrastructure employees), for asymptomatic persons exposed to persons with known or suspected COVID-19 or possible COVID-19:

Person	Exposure to:	Recommended Precautions for the Public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household member • Intimate partner • Individual providing care in a household without using recommended infection control precautions • Individual who has had close contact (< 6 feet)** for a prolonged period of time *** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person with symptomatic COVID-19 during period from 48 hours before symptoms onset until meets criteria for discontinuing home isolation (can be a laboratory-confirmed disease or a clinically compatible illness in a state or territory with widespread community transmission) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home until 14 days after last exposure and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others at all times • Self-monitor for symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check temperature twice a day ○ Watch for fever*, cough, or shortness of breath • Avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe illness (unless they live in the same home and had same exposure) • Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop
<p>All U.S. residents, other than those with a known risk exposure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible unrecognized COVID-19 exposures in U.S. communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert for symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watch for fever*, cough, or shortness of breath ○ Take temperature if symptoms develop • Practice social distancing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain 6 feet of distance from others ○ Stay out of crowded places • Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop

*For the purpose of this guidance, fever is defined as subjective fever (feeling feverish) or a measured temperature of 100.4oF (38oC) or higher. Note that fever may be intermittent or may not be present in some people, such as those who are elderly, immunosuppressed, or taking certain medications (e.g., NSAIDs).

** Data are limited to define of close contact. Factors to consider when defining close contact include proximity, the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), whether the individual has symptoms (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk) and whether the individual was wearing a face covering (which can efficiently block respiratory secretions from contaminating others and the environment).

***Data are insufficient to precisely define the duration of time that constitutes a prolonged exposure. Recommendations vary on the length of time of exposure from 10 minutes or more to 30 minutes or more. In healthcare settings, it is reasonable to define a prolonged exposure as any exposure greater than a few minutes because the contact is someone who is ill. Brief interactions are less likely to result in transmission; however, symptoms and the type of interaction (e.g., did the person cough directly into the face of the individual) remain important.