



# COVID-19 Contact Tracing Basics for Employers

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## A New Case

With each new diagnosis of COVID-19, [Lane County Public Health](#) (LCPH) conducts an [extensive investigation](#) with the person who has tested positive, including a discussion of a person's work situation.

LCPH is committed to protecting patient privacy and may not provide patient information to employers directly. However, we may let employers know there has been a case at their site without divulging the case's identity.

We encourage people who test positive to tell their employer, so the employer understands that an employee must stay home during their recovery and are aware that there may be others in the workplace that need to quarantine.

Cases in isolation and close contacts in quarantine should remain home for as long as directed by LCPH. The time varies depending on the situation and can be two weeks (or longer in special cases).

## Close Contacts

LCPH will identify and alert "close contacts," who are people at risk of developing COVID-19, having spent 15 or more minutes within 6 feet of the person who is COVID positive.

Close person-to-person contact accounts for the vast majority of cases (as far as we know now). So not everyone at a work site is necessarily a "close contact" or at risk, especially if all appropriate environmental controls are in place (masks, physical distancing, enhanced sanitation, etc).

All close contacts will be contacted directly by LCPH and monitored for the development of symptoms for as long as necessary.

Fellow employees should self-monitor for

symptoms which may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Symptoms may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache.

Close contacts that develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but do not yet have a lab confirmation are known as presumptive cases.

## Testing

**DO NOT send employees for testing immediately after notification of a positive test result.** LCPH will arrange for all identified close contacts of the case to be tested 5-7 days after their last exposure (the typical incubation period for the virus).

**It is important to know that close contacts cannot be "cleared" by testing.** Infection can develop anytime up to 14 days from exposure so close contacts must quarantine for the full 14 days as directed by LCPH.

If a close contact tests positive before the 14-day period ends, they become a new case and will do a full investigation with LCPH staff. If they test negative, they will continue quarantine until the 14 days is complete, and it is clear they have not developed symptoms.

Negative tests do not mean a close contact does not have COVID-19. It could just mean the person has not yet developed an *active* infection.

Sick employees should not return to work until the following criteria have been met: 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms); and, at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

## Communication

Employers can communicate with employees about a positive case among their staff but should do so without identifying the staff person who has tested positive. Let staff know that LCPH will be contacting them if we determine they are close contacts.

Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.

Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from all other individuals and sent home.

An employer can communicate with employees about what the company is doing to protect employees. Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in your facility, following [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Each business must evaluate whether and how to continue operations safely. Certain circumstances may require temporary closure (such as if all employees are close contacts or COVID+); however, LCPH will not require businesses to close for a specified amount of time.

For all businesses with 5 or more positive cases and 30 or more employees, OHA requires a public announcement of an outbreak in order to

identify all close contacts and ensure those exposed are aware of their risk. In such a case, LCPH will work closely with the business involved.

## Miscellaneous

OSHA recordkeeping requirements mandate employers record certain work-related injuries and illnesses on their OSHA 300 log, including any confirmed [COVID-19 case](#) that is [work-related](#) and involves one or more of the [general recording criteria](#).

From April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, federal law mandates that employers with less than 500 employees [provide workers with paid sick leave or paid family and medical leave](#) for specified reasons related to COVID-19.

Employers qualify for dollar-for-dollar reimbursement through tax credits for all qualifying wages paid under the federal paid sick leave and paid FMLA mandates.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees may qualify for exemption from the federal requirement to provide leave due to school closings or child care unavailability if the leave requirements would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern.

[Oregon's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#) program is a possible option for employees not covered under the federal mandates.