Responding and Returning to Work After a COVID-19 Exposure or Illness

COVID-19 Exposure Procedures

If you have had a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, you are encouraged to take the following steps:

1. **Remove the infected, or potentially infected, employee from the workplace/jobsite:** Prior to employee departure, obtain a full list of exposed workers (i.e., individuals who worked in close proximity (three to six feet without face covering/mask for longer than 15 minutes, per the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Physical Distancing guidelines) with the individual in the previous 14 days).

2. **Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and may need to take additional precautions:** Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Instruct potentially exposed employees to stay home for 14 days; employees may telework if possible, and self-monitor for symptoms as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
   - COVID-19 symptoms have been reported from asymptomatic to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

3. **Investigate:** Just as you would investigate a workplace injury (i.e., slip and fall), you must do the same for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases and document your investigation. Investigating will also assist with the determination of work-relatedness of the confirmed case or exposure. Include tracking in the investigation.
   - Under OSHA’s Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease recordkeeping requirements, COVID-19 is a recordable illness, and employers are responsible for recording cases of COVID-19, if all of the following are met:
     - The case is a confirmed case of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC;
     - The case is work-related as defined by 29 CFR § 1904.5; and
     - The case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 29 CFR § 1904.7.

4. **Cleaning and sanitizing the work area:** Rarely will you need to shut down your facility. If it has been less than seven days since the sick employee has been in the facility, barricade areas used by the sick person for prolonged periods of time:
   - Wait 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets.
   - During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.
If it has been seven days or more since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routinely cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces in the facility. Follow the CDC Guidance for Businesses Responding to COVID-19.

5. **Coming back to work:** According to CDC Return to Work Guidance, individuals may return to work in the following situations:

- **Individuals who think or know they had COVID-19 and had symptoms** may return to work if:
  a. At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medications, **and**
  b. Respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), **and**
  c. Ten days since symptoms first appeared.
    Depending on your healthcare provider’s advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you have been tested, you can be around others when you have no fever, respiratory symptoms have improved, and you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

- **Tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms** may return to work if:
  a. Ten days have passed since test
    Depending on your healthcare provider’s advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you have been tested, you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.
    If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for “Individuals who think or know they had COVID-19 and had symptoms.”

- **Anyone who has been around a person with COVID-19** may return to work if:
  a. Anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days **after exposure,** the time it takes to develop the illness.