Employer Guide for COVID-19 Worksite Exposure

Effective date:

Purpose: To provide guidance to local businesses in the event employees may have been exposed to COVID-19 at their worksite

Audience: Employers – Human Resources, Occupational Health, Managers/Supervisors

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Guide Contents

1. General Worksite Exposure: Instructions for ≤2 confirmed cases

2. Possible Worksite Outbreak: Instructions for ≥3 confirmed cases

3. Instructions: Recommended Steps for Exposed Close Contacts

4. Instructions: Previously Positive

5. Template: Letter from Employer to Employees Potentially Exposed to COVID-19

6. Resources: Employer/Employee

7. Resources: Testing

8. Resources: Other

Key Terminology

- **Case;** A person with a positive COVID-19 lab or someone who was diagnosed by their provider as having COVID-19.
- **Close Contact;** Someone sharing the same indoor airspace, e.g., home, clinic waiting room, airplane etc., for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes) during an infected person's (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) infectious period.
- **Infectious period;** The period of time when a positive case can infect other individuals. Infectious period starts 2 days before either; symptom onset if symptomatic or first positive test if asymptomatic, until they meet criteria for release of isolation
- **Exposure;** The potential for COVID-19 transmission at the worksite
- **Exposure Dates;** The dates a positive employee was onsite during their infectious period.
- **Quarantine;** period of time a person identified as a close contact need to stay home and away from others to monitor for symptoms and/or test and to avoid potential transmission.
- **Isolation;** period of time a confirmed case needs to stay home and away from others to avoid infecting others.

1. Instructions: Identifying Employees Potentially Exposed to COVID-19 when there is ≤2 confirmed case(s)

If an employer learns that an employee has tested positive or when a possible exposure to COVID-19 occurs in the workplace, employers need to be prepared to respond.

Once a COVID-19 case is identified among employees, the employer should conduct an investigation to identify all close contacts associated with the workplace (both employees and non-employees who spent time at the site) who had exposure to the case during the infectious period. The employer will need to determine the day and time the COVID-19 case was last present on site, activities the case completed and location where activities were performed. With this information the employer will determine which, if any, employees were exposed to COVID-19.

The employer will need to report the case as soon as possible to City of Berkeley, and information on all confirmed cases and close contacts involved in exposure. Please go to https://cdph.force.com/SPOT/s/IntakeForm for initial incident reporting. It is critical that the employer select Berkeley as the jurisdiction, **NOT** Alameda. This form will require input of basic information such as location and point of contact, along with case information. Once this initial information is submitted by the employer, City of Berkeley will email a link for the employer to directly input details of additional cases and contacts into the SPOT database.

Within one business day from when the employer knows there was an exposure, employers should communicate to the identified close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, while maintaining the affected employee's confidentiality. Employers should be particularly careful not to

disclose the affected employee's name.. Please refer to "**Section 3 Instructions: Recommended Steps for Exposed Close Contacts**" to review the guidance for those exposed. Employers may use the attached letter template to notify the close contacts of the potential exposure.

Per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Standards employers must "make COVID-19 testing available at no cost, during paid time, to all employees of the employer who had close contact in the workplace."

Over the counter (OTC) tests may be both self-administered and self-read if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided.

Close contacts MUST wear a well-fitting masked around others indoors for a total of 10 days from last date of contact to the infectious individual(s).

It is important that employers do not use testing to impermissibly discriminate against employees who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 (such as preventing them from resuming work after they can do so in a manner consistent with public health and safety). An employee who is currently infectious and completing their isolation period should not be allowed to return to work. Please review the Exclusion Requirements for Employees Who Test Positive for COVID-19, to determine when an employee is eligible to return to the worksite.

2. Instructions: Possible Worksite Outbreak with ≥3 confirmed cases

If an employer learns that there are ≥ 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19, please fill out the SPOT intake form, and then contact the City of Berkeley Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Program (CDPCP) immediately (within 1 business day) at 510-981-5292 or email cobcd@cityofberkeley.info with the subject line "Berkeley Worksite Exposure – possible outbreak".

To help expedite your Outbreak response, please be prepared to provide the following information and documentation to the CDPCP:

- **Case and Contact information** will be entered by employer into SPOT database (COB will send the employer a link with instructions upon report of an Outbreak)
- A **site map** with the workspace of the cases and/or symptomatic employees noted
- Written **COVID-19 Prevention Plan**
- **Vaccination Status** (including booster doses) of impacted employees

Once CDPCP receives this information you will be contacted by the assigned investigator within 1 business day. The investigator will review the information provided, conduct interviews as needed, and provide the employer with guidance on next steps. This may include site closure. CDPCP's recommendations for closures will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Assembly Bill 685 (2020):

Requires employers to notify employees who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and to report workplace outbreaks to the local health department.

Per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Standards employers must immediately institute testing if there is an outbreak:

Testing must be offered to all employees within an exposed group, at least once a week, except for employees who were not at work during the relevant period and symptom-free employees who recently recovered from COVID-19.

During outbreaks and major outbreaks, employers must now make weekly testing (outbreaks) or twice-weekly testing (major outbreaks) available to all employees in the exposed group, regardless of vaccination status. (FAQs)

Employees who are not tested within 3-5 days after close contact must be excluded from the workplace until the return to work requirements for COVID-19 cases are met. See release from home isolation criteria.

Once close contacts are identified, employers should communicate to these employees that they may have been potentially exposed to COVID-19, while maintaining the affected employee's confidentiality. Employers should be particularly careful not to disclose the affected employee's name. Employers may use the attached letter template to notify the close contacts of the potential exposure.

3. Instructions: Recommended Steps for Exposed Close Contacts

For all employees, regardless of vaccination status, of non-healthcare settings with no COVID-like symptoms; there is no need to quarantine following an exposure as long as they remain asymptomatic. Exposed employees should be be tested 3-5 days exposure and continue to participate in routine screening testing (if present) or after a known exposure in the worksite.

Refer to table below for close contact guidance

All Exposed Employees with COVID-19 Symptoms	
Everyone, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection	• Self-isolate and test as soon as possible to determine infection status. ○ For symptomatic persons who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, using an antigen test is preferred. • Remain in isolation while waiting for test results. If not tested, continue isolating for 10 days after the day of symptom onset, and if they cannot

	isolate, should wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days. • Consider continuing self-isolation and retesting in 1-2 days if testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms. • Continue to self-isolate if test result is positive and follow recommended actions for case isolation.
Asymptomatic Employees Who are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (No Quarantine Required)	
Everyone, regardless of vaccination status. Persons infected within the prior 90 days do not need to be tested, quarantined, or excluded from work unless symptoms develop.	• Test within 3-5 days after last exposure. • Per CDPH masking guidance, close contacts should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings and when near those at higher risk for severe COVID-19 disease. • Strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted. • If symptoms develop, test and stay home AND • If test result is positive, follow isolation recommendations of a positive case.

4. Instructions: Previously Positive

Individuals who have recovered from an active COVID infection, are within 3 months of the infection and do not have any symptoms, do not have to quarantine following an exposure to an active case. However, if someone develops COVID symptoms within 3 months from their first infection, the individual should be evaluated by a healthcare provider, and tested if indicated.

5. Template: Letter from Employer to Employees Potentially Exposed to COVID-19

This letter template is to be used on the business's letterhead.

Dear [Employee Name],

[Business Name] has been notified that one of our employees has been diagnosed with COVID-19. We conducted an investigation to determine co-workers who may have had close contact with the confirmed-positive employee. As such, you have been identified as an employee who may have been exposed to this virus between [Exposure Dates]. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Please see below instructions regarding work exclusion, sick leave and testing.

Sick Leave & Pay

Please note if you become ill you will be able to use your sick leave [insert link or attachment to relevant worksite policies as applicable]

Per the California Department of Industrial Relations covered employees in public or private sectors who work for employers with 26 or more employees are entitles to up to 80 hours of 2022 COVID-19 related paid sick leave from January 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022, immediately upon an oral or written request to their employer, with up to 40 of those house available only when an employee or family member tests positive for COVID-19. For more information go to:https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/COVID19Resources/2022-SPSL-FAQs.html

During this time if you experience symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, coughing or shortness of breath), please inform human resources at [contact information] and contact your health care provider. [Business Name] will keep all medical information confidential and will only disclose it on a need-to-know basis, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, we are required to maintain the confidentiality of any medical information we receive, including the name of any affected employee.

Testing

Please contact your health care provider to inquire about testing. If you do not have a health care provider or need to be connected to a testing site please visit https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/covid-19/get-tested-covid-19

If at any point you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, night sweats, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, muscle or body aches, headaches, confusion, or loss of sense of taste/smell), do not come to work, obtain a test if possible, and contact your employer accordingly.

If you have any immediate questions or concerns, you may contact [Employer contact information]. For more information on COVID-19, visit the City of Berkeley website at https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/covid-19

Sincerely,

[Employer Name]
[Title]

6. Resources: Employer/Employee

- CalOSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards
  https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/ETS.html

- COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions
  https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID19FAQs.html

- Employment Development Department (Disability Insurance & Paid Family Leave, Unemployment Insurance, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance)
  https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

- Labor & Workforce Development Agency
  https://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/

- Department of Industrial Relations, Labor Commissioner's Office
  https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)-Information.htm

- Department of Fair Employment and Housing
  https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/covid-19-resources-and-guidance/

- OnwardCA, State Employment & COVID-19 Resources
  https://onwardca.org/

- CDC Worker Safety & Response
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/index.html

7. Resources: Testing & Vaccines

- City of Berkeley Testing Information
  https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/covid-19/get-tested-covid-19

- City of Berkeley Vaccine Information
  https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines

- CA.gov list of COVID testing laboratories
  https://testing.covid19.ca.gov/covid-19-testing-task-force-laboratory-list/

- Color lab
  https://www.color.com/covid-testing-programs-for-employers

- Optum lab

  https://www.optum.com/business/resources/library/worksite-strategy-covid-19.html

8. Other Resources

- Alameda County COVID-19 Food Distribution
  http://www.acgov.org/maps/food-services.htm