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ND SMART RESTART GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for essential and non-essential workplaces (other than health care settings) when responding to notification that one or more employees test positive or are contacts to someone with COVID-19. Separate guidance for health care workers testing positive for COVID-19 is available.

Employee Health Screening and When to Exclude Ill Employee(s) from the Workplace

In addition to general employer/employee health policies, businesses should exclude ill employees who meet any of the following three criteria:

1) Employee is ill with fever (measured at 100.0° F or feels feverish) **OR** has any of the following **new or worsening** symptoms of cough, sore throat, muscle/body aches, severe headache with fever, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of taste/smell.
2) Employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 through diagnostic testing. Employers should inform coworkers and volunteers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) will also notify employers when cases in their workplace are reported.
   a. Employees with confirmed COVID-19 need to be excluded until at least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms (or 10 days from collection date of positive test if asymptomatic) **AND** the employee has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND** improvement of symptoms.
   b. A test-based strategy is **NOT** recommended to determine when to discontinue home isolation, except in certain circumstances when advised by a healthcare provider.
3) Potentially exposed coworkers, or individuals coming into close contact within 6 feet of the positive case for 15 cumulative minutes or longer, should be furloughed and stay at home for 14 days from last exposure to a COVID-19 positive case. Possible coworker exposure is considered when working in adjacent and shared spaces, such as at the same workstation, counter area, or food line, within 6 feet of one another for 15 cumulative minutes or longer. Should COVID-19-like symptoms develop during the 14-day quarantine, exposed coworkers should call their healthcare provider and get tested. If positive, the employee must stay home for at least 10 days from symptom onset. If negative, then the 14-day quarantine should continue.

Work Practices to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

The NDDoH has developed a [Workplace Assessment for COVID-19](#) (WAC) and provided the following guidance to help business owners, employers, non-profits, and managers make decisions that affect their individual operation while preparing to reopen. Employers are encouraged to use this self-assessment to guide potential best practices for preventing and responding to COVID-19 in the business setting. The WAC is not required to be reviewed or approved by the NDDoH or local public health unit (LPHU). Recognizing that conditions and circumstances change daily, employers may reach out to the NDDoH or LPHU if there are additional questions.

1. COVID-19 cases in North Dakota, but not identified in your community

Non-essential and essential businesses may continue regular operations and standard operating procedures if cases are not occurring in your community. Businesses and employers should follow [CDC guidance](#) regarding preparing for COVID-19 AND complete the [Workplace Assessment for COVID-19](#). Guidance includes employee screening methods, monitoring employee sick leave, asking sick employees to stay home, social distancing, ensuring handwashing, environmental cleaning, communicating with customers, etc. When possible, employees should telework.

2. COVID-19 case(s) identified in your community, but not in your workplace

Non-essential and essential businesses may continue regular operations and standard operating procedures. Businesses and employers should follow [CDC guidance](#) regarding preparing for COVID-19 AND complete the [Workplace Assessment for COVID-19](#). Guidance includes employee screening methods, monitoring employee sick leave, asking sick employees to stay home, social distancing, ensuring handwashing, environmental cleaning, communicating with customers, etc. When possible, employees should telework.

3. Employee(s) tests positive / COVID-19 case(s) in your workplace

If an employee/volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, the NDDoH will notify your place of work while maintaining the privacy of the case. If the business owner or manager is made aware of a positive COVID-19 employee prior to being contacted by the NDDoH, please **immediately** report the case to the NDDoH at 1-800-472-2180 or 701-328-2378.

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Employees with confirmed COVID-19 need to be excluded until

(1) at least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms (or 10 days from specimen collection date of positive test if asymptomatic) **AND** the employee has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND** improvement of symptoms

One employee tested positive OR workplace close contacts report symptoms - Next Steps

1) Follow employee exclusion criteria
2) Rapidly identify close contacts potentially exposed in the workplace and follow recommended 14-day quarantine
3) Close off areas used by the person who is sick. CDC recommends waiting at least 24 hours before conducting extensive environmental cleaning in the area. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

A second employee tested positive within 14 days of first employee OR workplace close contacts report symptoms – Next Steps

1) Follow employee exclusion criteria
2) Rapidly identify close contacts potentially exposed in the workplace and follow recommended 14-day quarantine
3) If a second case is identified in a common workplace within 72 hours of the first case and contact tracing is needed to identify close contacts at the workplace, public health will provide just-in-time guidance to the employer and the case.

   Closure of the areas used by positive employees is recommended for up to 48 hours to allow adequate time for extensive environmental cleaning and contact tracing. In large, open areas sharing air ventilation, air conditioning, or air exchange or where it is difficult to close off areas with solid separation, consider closing the entire space for 72 hours. Complete (or review if previously completed) the Workplace Assessment for COVID-19 prior to reopening.

Additional employees test positive OR workplace close contacts report symptoms

1) Follow employee exclusion criteria
2) Rapidly identify close contacts potentially exposed in the workplace and follow recommended 14-day quarantine (stay home).

Updated 07/30/2020

3) Consider closing for 14 days from last case if additional employees test positive or become symptomatic within 14 days, in an effort to prevent and reduce transmission among employees. Symptomatic employees should contact their healthcare provider to request testing and follow home-isolation guidance. Extensive environmental cleaning should be conducted during this time. In large, open areas sharing air ventilation, air conditioning, or air exchange or where it is difficult to close off with solid separation, consider closing the entire space for 14 days. Complete (or review if previously completed) the Workplace Assessment for COVID-19 prior to reopening.

If ongoing spread in the workplace is identified, public health will provide guidance as to how long businesses should close and offer guidance on preparing to reopen.

COVID-19 close contact(s) in your workplace

A close contact means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes with an individual with confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19. The timeframe for an exposure to an infected individual includes the period of time 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic (or tested positive if asymptomatic) and while the individual was contagious (at least 10 days after onset of symptoms or positive test if asymptomatic).

Employees or volunteers who are identified as close contacts or household contacts to a confirmed case of COVID-19 are recommended to be quarantined for 14 days from their last exposure to a case while the case is contagious. Close contacts will be identified by public health during the investigation. Close contacts who develop symptoms during their quarantine should obtain COVID-19 testing. Even if close contacts test negative during the 14-day quarantine, that does not mean that they will not go on to develop COVID-19 during the 14 days after exposure.

Asymptomatic close contacts from the workplace should be tested after an exposure to COVID-19. Ideally, testing should occur 7 to 10 days after last exposure to a COVID-19 case. If an outbreak is occurring in the workplace, then testing should occur as soon as possible. Even if close contacts test negative during the 14-day quarantine period, they still may go on to develop COVID-19 during the 14 days after exposure. If exposed, these individuals should be quarantined for 14 days, even with a negative test result.

ESSENTIAL Workforce Exceptions and Recommendations for COVID-19

This guidance is for people who are essential workers (**excluding health care providers**) as defined by the [United States Department of Homeland Security.](#)

Critical infrastructure/essential workers, including personnel in different sectors of work including:

- Federal, state, & local law enforcement
- 911 call center employees
- Fusion Center employees
- Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector
- Janitorial staff and other custodial staff
- Workers – including contracted vendors – in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities

The North Dakota Department of Health strongly recommends that all close contacts of individuals infected with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days past the last day they were in contact with the person who tested positive. The risk is high that a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19 will go on to develop COVID-19. Unless there are critical workforce shortages, close contacts to COVID-19 cases should be quarantined for 14 days.

CDC published interim guidance for [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#). This guidance offers exceptions for critical infrastructure workers identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case suggesting essential workers may attend work if deemed necessary provided the employer take special precautions including adherence to the [Workplace Assessment for COVID-19](#).

- Employees/volunteers identified as close contacts to a person with COVID-19 and who are considered [critical infrastructure workers](#) may return to work as long as they remain **asymptomatic** and the following safety practices are implemented by the employee and the employer:
    1. Notify: Employees should notify a supervisor and/or occupational health representative of their contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

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2. Pre-Screen: Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to their starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
3. Regular Monitoring: As long as the employee doesn't have a fever or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
4. Wear a Mask: The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after the last exposure. Employers can issue face masks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
5. Social Distance: The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
6. Disinfect and Clean Workspaces: Extensive environmental cleaning of all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

For additional information, please see the NDDoH Factsheet for Essential Workers.

COVID-19 Testing Recommendations at the Workplace

Symptomatic exposed workers should contact their healthcare provider for testing.

Asymptomatic coworkers identified by public health as close contacts are also recommended to be tested. Testing ideally should occur 7-10 days after last exposure to a case. If an outbreak is occurring in the facility, then testing may occur as soon as possible. If positive, then the employee must stay home for 10 days from the date of the test. If negative, then the 14-day quarantine should continue.

Additional testing strategies and recommendations are available for high density critical infrastructure workplaces (i.e., food processing, manufacturing plants).