

Guidance for Managing COVID-19 Exposure

The County continues to provide information, updates and guidance to ensure a collaborative approach toward maintaining County operations while protecting the health and safety of employees and the public. It is important we remain alert to the changing scenarios presented by COVID-19 and be ready to adapt our Orange County Government practices quickly.

Background

People with a COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or not, can spread the virus through their respiratory secretions, especially when they cough or sneeze. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is likely spread from person-to-person when there is **prolonged exposure** with someone who has **COVID-19 symptoms**, and the **distance between the individuals is up to 3 feet**. It is reasonable to define prolonged exposure as **any exposure greater than 15 minutes**. According to the CDC, among the [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#) are **fever of 100.4 degrees or greater, cough, fatigue, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell, muscle or body aches, headache, nausea or vomiting, sore throat, and congestion or runny nose**. The County will assume that individuals with these symptoms have COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccines are [safe and effective](#) and although individuals may experience side effects after vaccination, these are normal signs that the body is building protection. If an employee received a COVID-19 vaccine in the last 1-3 days, the following symptoms may be caused by the vaccine or illness: **fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle and body aches**. The CDC recommends anyone with a fever should be excluded from work, except those with “normal” post vaccination symptoms.

The vaccination does not cause: **cough, shortness of breath, runny nose/congestion, sore throat, loss of taste or smell**. Employees with these symptoms should be quarantined per the usual pathway indicated below based on exposure risk for COVID-19. It is also recommended that they be evaluated by their personal healthcare provider.

Fully Vaccinated vs. Unvaccinated

It typically takes two weeks for an individual who has been fully vaccinated to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19. People are considered [fully vaccinated](#):

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

Individuals who do not meet these requirements are considered *unvaccinated*. They should keep taking all [precautions](#) until fully vaccinated.

Fully vaccinated employees are not required to quarantine, if they have no symptoms of the COVID-19 virus and can show appropriate proof of vaccination.

Employees who are symptomatic and/or are unable to show appropriate proof of vaccination may be treated as unvaccinated. For more information visit the [CDC's Vaccines for COVID-19 webpage](#). Employees who are fully vaccinated should continue to exercise the following safety measures while at work:

- Adhere to County's [workplace safety guidelines](#)
- Take precautions in public like wearing a well-fitted mask and physical distancing
- Avoid medium and large-sized in-person gatherings, when possible
- Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#)

COVID-19 Exposure Risk

In our work environments, the risk of exposure to the virus may vary depending on the employee's requirement to perform tasks within close contact of individuals known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19. For purposes of identifying employees who may be at potential risk, job tasks may be broken into the following categories:

High Exposure Risk

Staff performing tasks at this level are at the **highest risk of prolonged exposure** with individuals who are known or suspected COVID-19 patients. Examples include healthcare service delivery staff; first responders and medical transport staff; law enforcement, and staff providing care and custody of inmates.

Medium Exposure Risk

Staff performing tasks that put them in **close and frequent contact** with each other and the general public. Many County positions fall into this category and are at **moderate risk of exposure** with individuals known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19.

Lower Exposure Risk

Staff performing tasks with minimal and **infrequent direct contact** with each other or the public. Many County positions fall into this category and are at **least risk of exposure** with individuals known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19.

Note: It is important every possible precaution be taken to minimize everyone's risk of exposure to COVID-19. Currently, employees at all the above risk levels continue to work and deliver essential County services. You are encouraged to further minimize potential risk by **re-evaluating your staff's work and re-assigning as many employees as possible to work from home**.

Managing High Exposure Employees (Public Health/First Responders/Corrections): Monitoring/Self-Isolation

[\(Click Here or See Table Below\)](#)

The following guidance is provided to assist you in determining when and how to respond to an employee who may have become “**at risk**” because he or she had **prolonged close exposure**, has the **COVID-19 symptoms described above** or has been **tested positive (with or without symptoms described above) for COVID-19 infection**.

1. Conditions for Employee Monitoring:

Public Health/First Responders/Corrections unvaccinated employees who had **prolonged exposure (within 3 feet) of an individual known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19**, but *have no COVID-19 symptoms* are required to **report for work and must:**

- A. Wear a County-supplied mask at all times for 14 days and then continue to wear a mask in accordance with OC Safety Manual.
- B. Submit to twice-daily temperature and symptom checks.
- C. Maintain 3 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

2. Conditions for Employee Self-Isolation:

High Exposure Risk unvaccinated employees who had **prolonged exposure (within 3 feet) of an individual known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19** and currently *have the COVID-19 symptoms described above* or who *tested positive for COVID-19 with or without symptoms of illness* are required to **Self-isolate at home**.

While at home, an employee is expected to:

- Provide updated contact information; and
- Check-in with his or her supervisor on each regularly scheduled work day to provide an update on their wellbeing.

Managing Medium and Lower Exposure Employees: Self-Quarantine/Self-Isolation

[\(Click Here or See Table Below\)](#)

1. Conditions for Employee Self-Quarantine:

Any unvaccinated employee who had prolonged exposure (within 3 feet) of an individual known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19, but *has no COVID-19 symptoms* is required to self-quarantine at home.

While at home, an employee is expected to:

- Provide updated contact information; and
- Check-in with his or her supervisor on each regularly scheduled work day to provide an update on their wellbeing.

2. Conditions for Employee Self-Isolation:

Any unvaccinated employee who had prolonged exposure (within 3 feet) of an individual known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19 and currently *has the COVID-19 symptoms described above* or who *tested positive for COVID-19 with or without symptoms of illness* is required to Self-isolate at home.

While at home, an employee is expected to:

- Provide updated contact information; and
- Check-in with his or her supervisor on each regularly scheduled workday to provide an update on their wellbeing.

When notified by your employees of a potential exposure, please have them complete the [COVID-19 Exposure Questionnaire](#). The questionnaire is intended to assist you in determining when employees may work from home, continue to work at their usual location with protective gear (and monitor conditions), or when self-quarantine or self-isolation at home is required.

NOTE: In accordance with the CDC, individuals who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine and test following a known exposure if asymptomatic.

Traveling During COVID-19

Travel can increase an employee's chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. However, with more and more people receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, the CDC has updated its guidelines regarding domestic and international travel. For employees who are not fully vaccinated, it is strongly recommended that they review and fully understand the CDC travel restrictions.

Domestic Travel:

- Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread COVID-19
- Employees who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine can travel safely within the U.S.
 - No need to get tested before and/or after travel unless the destination requires it
 - No need to self-quarantine
- Fully vaccinated travelers should still follow CDC's recommendations for traveling safely including:
 - Wear a mask over your nose and mouth
 - Stay three feet from others and avoid crowds
 - Wash hands and use hand sanitizer often
- For more information about domestic travel, visit the [CDC's Domestic Travel During COVID-19 webpage](#)

International travel: While fully vaccinated employees are less likely to get and spread COVID-19, traveling internationally poses additional risks even for those who have received the vaccination. Visit the [CDC's International Travel During COVID-19 webpage](#) for guidance on traveling internationally.

For more information and travel guidance, check with the state or local health department where you are, along your route, *and* at your planned destination. The [CDC's website](#) also continues to be updated with the latest information about traveling during COVID-19. Just because there are no restrictions at the time you plan to leave does not mean there will not be restrictions in place when you arrive.

In general, as a director/manager you should require confirmed and probable COVID-19 positive employees to immediately isolate (or quarantine) from the workplace (in accordance with CDC guidance).

Consistent with [CDC contact tracing guidelines](#), you need to gather as much information as possible from the impacted employee to help identify everyone with whom they may have had close contact (within 3 feet for at least 15 minutes) during the time when they may have been infectious. Then work to notify other staff members (contacts) identified by the positive employee as soon as possible about their potential exposure to "a positive case" in the workplace, and request they self-quarantine for 10 days (and consult with a health professional for testing/follow-up). When appropriate, you may approve a telework arrangement for employees who are required to self-quarantine.

Since April 1, 2020, employees have been able to utilize two benefits passed by the FFCRA emergency federal legislation, Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) and Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL). These benefits expired on December 31, 2020, as they were not included in the second round of stimulus legislation/COVID-19 Economic Relief Bill-HR 133. However, effective January 1, 2021, management may place employees on a one-time Relief of Duty with pay leave for absences related to COVID-19 quarantine/illness, through June 30, 2021. This leave may not exceed 80 hours and may only be authorized for employees who have not accessed the previous FFCRA Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) benefit. If the employee previously utilized EPSL or will need to continue their absence beyond two weeks of the initial absence, he or she may apply their applicable accrued leave.

Returning Employees to Work *(See Table Below)*

1. Employee Returning from Self-Quarantine (Asymptomatic – no symptoms):

An employee who was quarantined due to a COVID-19 exposure may safely return to a regular work setting after 10 calendar days from date of close contact and at least 24 hours without a fever and symptoms; *or* after 7 calendar days from date of close contact, if a COVID-19 test is taken on the 7th day and the result is negative and there are no symptoms.

2. Employee Returning from Self-Isolation (Positive COVID-19 or symptomatic - displays symptoms similar to COVID-19):

An employee who tested positive for COVID-19 or displays symptoms similar to COVID-19 may safely return after:

- A. Release by healthcare professional
- B. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- C. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication)
- D. Improved Symptoms

****Note:** An employee who self-isolated due to a **positive test for COVID-19 and never had symptoms** may return to work 10 days after their positive test and after conferring with a health care provider. Upon return, the employee should distance themselves from others and must wear a mask at work for an additional 3 days.

It is important to maintain consistency in our response; therefore, it is recommended unique concerns be escalated to your respective Deputy County Administrator.

Thank you for your cooperation and we will continue to keep you updated.

High Exposure Employees (Public Health/First Responders/Corrections): Staff performing tasks at this level are at the highest risk of prolonged close contact with individuals who are known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

Exposure Type	Available Work Options (Management Decision)						Return to Work Requirement *County Provided Mask
	Work From Home	Quarantine (10 days)	Isolation	No Work Status	Standard Work Location for First Responders (Mask Required and submit to twice-daily temp. and symptom checks) *	Standard Work Location (No-Mask Required)	
Prolonged Close Exposure							
w/ No Symptoms	X				X		Required to wear mask for 14 days and then continue to wear a mask in accordance with Orange County Safety Manual . Fully vaccinated employees are not required to work from home.
w/ Symptoms			X	X			Release by healthcare professional, and A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms
Positive COVID-19 test with or without** symptoms			X	X			Release by healthcare professional and A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms NOTE: An employee who self-isolated due to a positive test for COVID-19 and never had symptoms may return to work 10 days after their positive test and after conferring with a health care provider. Upon return, the employee should distance themselves from others and must wear a mask at work for an additional 3 days, and then continue to wear a mask in accordance with Orange County Safety Manual .

High Exposure Employees (Public Health/First Responders/Corrections): Staff performing tasks at this level are at the highest risk of prolonged close contact with individuals who are known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

No Prolonged Close Exposure							
w/ No Symptoms	X					X	
w/ Symptoms			X	X			Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u> A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms
Positive COVID-19 test with or without** symptoms			X	X			Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u> A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms **NOTE – An employee who self-isolated due to a positive test for COVID-19 and never had symptoms may return to work 10 days after their positive test and after conferring with a health care provider. Upon return, the employee should distance themselves from others and must wear a mask at work for an additional 3 days, and then continue to wear a mask in accordance with Orange County Safety Manual .

Medium and Lower Exposure Employees: Staff performing tasks at various levels of risk exposure due to their contact with individuals who are known, or suspected of having COVID-19 infection.

Exposure Type	Available Work Options (Management Decision)						Return to Work Requirement *County Provided Mask
	Work from Home	Quarantine	Isolation	No Work Status	Standard Work Location for First Responders (Mask required; submit to twice-daily temp/symptom checks)*	Standard Work Location (No mask required)	
Prolonged Close Exposure							
w/ No Symptoms	X	X					<p>No COVID-19 test taken: May return to a regular work setting after 10 days from date of close contact and at least 24 hours without a fever and symptoms.</p> <p>COVID-19 test taken: May return to a regular work setting after 7 days from date of close contact, if a COVID-19 test is taken on the 7th day, the result is negative and there are no symptoms.</p> <p>Fully vaccinated employees are not required to work from home or quarantine.</p>
w/ Symptoms			X	X			<p>Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u></p> <p>A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms</p>
Positive COVID-19 test with or without** symptoms			X	X			<p>Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u></p> <p>A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms</p> <p>**NOTE – An employee who self-isolated due to a positive test for COVID-19 and never had symptoms may return to work 10 days after their positive test and after conferring with a health care provider. Upon return, the employee should distance themselves from others and must wear a mask at work for an additional 3 days.</p>
No Prolonged Close Exposure							

Medium and Lower Exposure Employees: Staff performing tasks at various levels of risk exposure due to their contact with individuals who are known, or suspected of having COVID-19 infection.

w/ Symptoms			X	X			<p>Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u></p> <p>A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms</p>
Positive COVID-19 test with or without** symptoms			X	X			<p>Release by healthcare professional <u>and</u></p> <p>A. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared B. At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever (without fever-reducing medication) C. Improved Symptoms</p> <p>**NOTE – An employee who self-isolated due to a positive test for COVID-19 and never had symptoms may return to work 10 days after their positive test and after conferring with a health care provider. Upon return, the employee should distance themselves from others and must wear a mask at work for an additional 3 days.</p>