



What to Do if Your Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

(Revised 7/13/20 – Updated information is highlighted in yellow)

Our **BEST** outcome is to avoid the need to use the steps outlined below by protecting our employees from exposure to or infection by the virus. The best way to achieve that outcome is to **always practice social distancing**. However, if one of your employees is confirmed as having COVID-19, follow these steps:

- This is a time for sensitivity and humanity. When the employee brings you the news, **express sympathy**.
 - They are likely to be anxious about what might happen or whether they might have spread the virus to their family or coworkers.
 - Let the employee share their feelings. As you talk with them, clearly communicate that they can count on you and the team to be supportive.
 - Example: “I know this is a scary thing to deal with. I’m here for you if you need to talk, and I understand that you may not be able to work for a little while. Don’t worry about that, I understand what you’re dealing with.”
- **Ask the employee for the following information:**
 - When did the symptoms start?
 - When was the employee last at work?
 - When was the employee tested and when did they receive their test results?
 - Which coworkers has the employee been in “close contact” with and when in the prior two weeks. (Note: The CDC defines a “close contact” as someone who has “been within six feet of the infected employee for a prolonged period of time.”)
- **Instruct the employee to stay home and to consult their health care provider.** IYR will require a written authorization from the employee’s healthcare provider before we will allow the employee to return to work.
- **Next, contact HR. You need to act quickly to minimize the risk of the disease spreading.**
 - Based on the information provided by the employee, HR will help you assess the information provided by the employee to determine the time window when infection might have occurred, and which co-workers should be notified.
 - Decide whether you or HR should **communicate with the close contacts** the employee named and who you and HR decide were **at risk of infection**.
 - This is a sensitive topic, **so alert those coworkers by phone as soon as possible. Time matters** - if you can’t reach them personally, email them with “important action required” in the subject heading.
 - You may have other employees who work in the same area who you and HR have determined were not in “close contact” with the employee who tested positive, but who are frightened about their possible exposure to the virus and wish to self-quarantine or be tested. HR will assist those staff members with their testing and leave options.
 - **Confidentiality is critical.** You should tell everyone who was possibly exposed to the positive employee at work without revealing that employee’s identity.
 - **Here is the message to share with employees who may have been exposed:**
“Someone in our workplace has tested positive for COVID-19, and they have identified you as a close contact according to the CDC definition. We are here to support you. If you are at work, please prepare to leave as quickly as you can. Once you get home - or if you are already working from there - find a place to self-isolate (the CDC recommends 14 days since last exposure), monitor yourself for any symptoms, and talk to your doctors. You

may also seek a COVID-19 test to determine if you have been infected. HR will help guide you on your testing options. How can I support you in doing all this?"

- **Employees who were identified as “close contact” and are required to self-isolate at home should:**
 - Consider being tested for COVID-19. HR will assist them with their testing options.
 - If the employee is tested, they may return to work before the 14-day isolation period has expired **if both of the following are true:**
 1. They are free from fever or other COVID symptoms for 24 hours without the use of fever or symptom reducing medications; and
 2. They provide their negative test result to their supervisor (you will forward the test result to HR).
 - Ask their supervisor if there is work they could do from home. In that case they would continue to receive their normal pay. If there is no such work available, or the employee does not want to work from home they should:
 - Use any remaining IYR Emergency Pandemic Sick Leave (EPSL);
 - Then use any remaining PTO or vacation;
 - Then use any remaining sick leave.
 - If the employee has used all accrued IYR EPSL, PTO, vacation, or sick leave, or chooses not to use those paid benefits, they will be in an unpaid status.
 - People in the close contact group will likely be nervous and ask a lot of questions. They may ask you if their family is at risk. **Don’t speculate.** You are not a doctor. **Refer them to their own physician and to the CDC website. Keep their spirits up and reassure them** that the company, and you, will be supportive.
 - **Follow up this conversation by email and CC HR.** It’s likely the person you talked to was feeling overwhelmed and didn’t catch everything you said. A written follow-up is always good practice as it documents the conversation that occurred.
 - **Note:** An employee may report having been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 but is not another IYR employee. In these cases we will follow the above protocol, including evaluation of whether close contact occurred and self-isolation and testing, if appropriate.
- Once you have spoken with both the employee who tested positive and their identified close contacts, **the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will determine how to communicate the situation with other IYR employees.**
 - Those communications will **respect the confidentiality of both the positive-tested employee and anyone in the close-contact group.**
 - Example: “An IYR employee tested positive on [Date] and is now self-isolating. The close contacts have been told and were asked to leave the workplace and self-isolate. If you were not already told you were a close contact, then you are not one. If you have questions about Covid-19 or your situation, please call your doctor and look at the CDC website. IYR is here to support everyone during this difficult time, and we all send our best wishes to the people affected.”
 - **As soon as possible clear the work area of all employees until the physical spaces where the infected employee or other potentially infected employees worked are thoroughly sanitized.** The Facilities Team can help with this requirement.
 - **You should fill out a Supervisor’s Accident Report to document the circumstances of the employee’s positive test and your instruction to other employees who were determined to be in “close contact” with that employee.**
 - **A senior leader, including the CEO or other ELT member should check in on employees affected by COVID-19.** These calls will help affected employees feel cared for during a difficult time.
 - **REMEMBER:** It is **CRITICAL** that we **practice and enforce social distancing** at all times!