

What if my employee tests positive for COVID-19?

FROM MANITOBA PUBLIC HEALTH:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON IS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

1. The testing lab notifies the responsible public health unit of each positive case of COVID-19.
2. Public health officials then follow-up with the individual case within 24 hours to:
 - let the person know that they tested positive
 - advise them of the need to isolate for a specified duration of time
 - try to determine how they may have been exposed to COVID-19
 - determine when they were infectious
 - identify any locations or settings they visited during their infectious period (e.g. work or public places)
 - determine who their close contacts (i.e. within two metres/six feet for at least 15 minutes) were/are
3. If close contacts are identified, public health officials will:
 - contact those individuals to advise them of the situation
 - confirm if they were in fact a close contact, and if so, to advise them to immediately self-isolate for 14 days following the last date of exposure to the case
 - provide them with information on how to self-monitor for symptoms, and what to do if they develop symptoms during their self-isolation period (which extends from 14 days from their last known contact with the case)
4. Public health officials will also contact anyone else who they may need to speak with to assess risk to others (e.g. the employer).
5. If the investigation determines that there was a risk of exposure in a workplace or public setting, public health officials will assess the risk and may issue a public notice. In the notice, details of the potential exposure setting will be provided, as well as direction for individuals who may have been present (at the specified time) to self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate immediately if they develop symptoms.

Note: If the public health investigation determines that there was no risk of exposure in the workplace, public health officials will not contact the employer.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE EMPLOYEE WAS AT WORK WHILE INFECTIOUS?

- If a person was at work while infectious, public health officials will determine if they posed any additional risk to the workplace than what exists in the general community.
- Public health officials will consult with the employer if additional information is needed about the individual (e.g. to confirm their close contacts or to clarify details that the employee cannot provide) or if any other measures need to be taken by the workplace or staff to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Employers should maintain employee contact information, records pertaining to their scheduled working times and cohort work groups, and visitor activity at the workplace in order to facilitate public health official's ability to establish close contacts.
- Public health officials are required by law to respect the privacy of the person infected, and will only disclose a positive case to an employer if it is needed to manage the exposure risk to others.
- In accordance with privacy laws, the employer must ensure their employee's personal health information related to COVID-19, or any other health condition, remains confidential.
- An employer may decide to notify other staff or visitors that there has been a possible case in their workplace while protecting the names of individual cases to ensure the personal health information of the workers remains confidential.
- Employers should also maintain policies to ensure the personal health information of their workers remains confidential. To best protect an employee's privacy, it is advised that employers use/share the least amount of information possible.
- Communication with the Health Protection Unit, including a public health inspection, may occur to ensure the facility meets the requirement of the public health orders, disinfection and sanitation.

DO ALL WORKERS IN THE WORKPLACE NEED TO BE TESTED?

- The public health investigation will identify close contacts who will be asked to self-monitor and self-isolate. If individuals develop symptoms, they will be instructed to complete the online screening self-assessment tool (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>) or, contact Health Links – Info Santé at 204-788-8200 (or toll free at 1-888-315-9257) for testing and isolation guidance.
- Depending on the situation, public health officials may advise individuals who have no symptoms to get tested. This guidance will depend on the results of the public health investigation.

DO CASES AND CONTACTS REQUIRE A NEGATIVE TEST TO RETURN TO WORK?

- Cases and contacts do not require a negative test to return to work.
- Provided cases no longer have a fever and their condition has improved, they can stop isolation as early as 10 days from the start of symptoms. Public health officials will be in daily contact to monitor symptoms, and will provide direction on when it is safe to stop isolating.
- Contacts can stop self-isolating 14 days after their last known contact with a confirmed case.

SAMPLE MEMO NOTIFYING EMPLOYEES AND/OR PUBLIC OF A POSITIVE CASE IN THE WORKPLACE

An Important Update

<<DATE>>

Today we were notified that one of our staff has been confirmed to have the COVID-19 virus.

At this time, the employee is in self-isolation.

We're assisting provincial public health officials in their investigation. Individuals identified as close contacts (having spent more than 15 minutes within less than two meters) of the confirmed case will be contacted by public health officials.

We are currently taking all necessary precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace and ensure the safety of our employees and visitors/customers.

We do know that COVID-19 is a risk in our communities. We encourage everyone to take precautions and follow key public health fundamentals, including: staying home if you're sick, even if symptoms are only mild; washing your hands at least 15 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; practicing proper cough etiquette and maintaining physical distancing when you do have to go out.

Manitoba public health orders can be found at www.manitoba.ca/covid19/protection/soe.html.

More information on COVID-19 can be found at www.manitoba.ca/covid19.

As your employer, we want to let you know that we are here to support you and answer any additional workplace-related concerns and questions during this difficult time.

Thank you,

<<OWNER>>