

COVID-19 FAQs FOR SUPERVISORS

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Administrative Entity

Department of Human Resources
(916) 808-5731
humanresources@cityofsacramento.org

1. WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE COMES TO WORK WITH SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

A. What are the typical symptoms of COVID-19?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with COVID-19 may experience these symptoms:

- Fever (or chills)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Please call an emergency provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

B. Can I send an employee home who exhibits these symptoms?

Yes. You are required to maintain a safe and healthy workplace for employees, and the CDC states that employees who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should leave the workplace. If an employee has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, the employee should be sent home immediately. If an employee has no fever, but is exhibiting two or more of the other symptoms, the employee should be sent home immediately, and asked to seek a COVID-19 test.

Some employees who exhibit two (2) or more of the symptoms above may insist that they are suffering from allergies, a cold, or the flu, however because we cannot distinguish the symptoms from these and COVID-19, these employees should be sent home**.

C. Who do I notify if I send an employee home with symptoms of COVID-19?

Notify your Department Director, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Specialist, and Labor Relations Officer (LRO) immediately.

D. If someone is sent home, do we need to disinfect their workspace?

Yes. Contact your department EH&S Specialist for assistance.

E. Can I take an employee's temperature?

Yes. You may measure an employee's temperature but doing so requires a non-touch infrared thermometer, compliance with City-issued protocols, and authorization from the Department Director and Director of Human Resources. For further assistance contact your department's EH&S Specialist.

Employee test results must be maintained as a confidential medical record.

F. If any employee has symptoms after getting vaccinated, do they need to self-isolate for 10 days?

This will need to be evaluated and addressed case-by-case, depending on the employee's symptoms. Depending on the severity of symptoms, the employee should consider seeking medical treatment from a qualified provider, if necessary.

If an employee has symptoms consistent with known side effects of the vaccine (listed below), the employee does not need to self-isolate.

- On the arm where shot was received: pain, redness, and swelling.
- Throughout the rest of the body: tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea.

If an employee has either of the following symptoms, they should self-isolate for ten (10) days.

- Shortness of breath/trouble breathing (depending on the severity of symptoms, the employee should consider seeking medical treatment from a qualified provider, if necessary).
- New loss of taste and smell.

2. WHAT CAN I ASK AN EMPLOYEE CALLING IN SICK?

A. If an employee calls in sick, can I ask questions about their symptoms to determine if they might have COVID-19?

Yes. You can ask employees whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. If the employee has symptoms of COVID-19, contact your Department Director, EH&S Specialist, and Labor Relations Officer immediately. This information must be maintained as a confidential medical record.

B. Can I ask an employee if they tested positive for COVID-19 (COVID-19 case) or came into close contact* with someone who has?

Yes. You can ask an employee if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in close contact* with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This information is necessary to make decisions about who does or does not report to work in order to maintain a safe workplace. This information must be maintained as a confidential medical record.

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been directed by a medical professional to self-quarantine, ask them who in the workplace they have been in close contact* within the prior 48-hours from the onset of symptoms or from the day they began to seek a test.

C. Can I ask an employee what their underlying medical condition is?

No. You cannot ask an employee about other medical conditions. You may only ask if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact* with anyone who is exhibiting symptoms. This information must be maintained as a confidential medical record.

If an employee has a pre-existing condition, including an underlying health condition or compromised immune system, the employee may request a reasonable accommodation (such as the ability to telecommute). If an employee requests a reasonable accommodation, you should immediately contact the City's ADA and Leaves Manager, Jami Kinney, at (916) 808-8976 or via email at jkinney@cityofsacramento.org.

D. Can I ask an employee to be tested for COVID-19 because they have flu-like symptoms?

You can ask them to seek medical attention and get tested, but you cannot require an employee to be tested.

But if an employee has COVID-19 symptoms (see FAQ 1 above), they should be sent home immediately**.

3. WHAT DO I DO IF AN EMPLOYEE COMES IN CLOSE CONTACT* WITH SOMEONE WITH COVID-19, IS QUARANTINED, OR HAS COVID-19?

A. What information can I reveal if an employee is quarantined, tests positive for COVID-19, or has come in close contact* with someone who has COVID-19?

You cannot identify the employee by name in the workplace – it is important to protect their privacy and comply with privacy laws.

Immediately consult with your supervisor who will coordinate with the Department Director, EH&S Specialist, and Labor Relations. Designated city staff will perform contact tracing to identify and notify affected employees¹.

B. Do I need to send home an employee who has had close contact* with a person with COVID-19?

The answer depends on the exposed employee's vaccination status. To determine the employee's vaccination status, you can ask for proof of vaccination (COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card).

If the employee is unable to immediately provide their proof of vaccination, you can ask the following questions to determine vaccination status. This will still need to be confirmed by obtaining the proof of vaccination.

- Have you been vaccinated for COVID-19? (Yes/No)
- If so, please provide the date you received the first and/or second dose, if applicable:
 - First dose date: _____
 - Second dose date: _____
- Which vaccine did you receive (e.g., Pfizer, Moderna, J&J)?

Fully Vaccinated Employees

An employee is considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

Fully vaccinated employees who report or have been identified to have had a close contact* exposure to a person with COVID-19 are not required to self-quarantine if they are asymptomatic. If the employee experiences any symptoms, they must self-isolate immediately and should seek a test.

Non-Vaccinated Employees

Employees who are not yet vaccinated or who are not fully vaccinated and who report or have been identified to have had a close contact* exposure to a person with COVID-19 should be sent home to self-quarantine for 14 days. These employees may return to the workplace ten (10) days after the last known COVID-19 exposure to a COVID-19 case, if the employee remains asymptomatic. Employees returning ten (10) days after last known exposure are

¹ Notification will be made to parties identified in California AB 685, as amended.

required to wear a surgical mask in the workplace, practice strict physical distancing, and self-monitor for symptoms through day fourteen (14).

If the non-vaccinated or not fully vaccinated employee can work from home, they should be permitted to do so. Employees whose job functions are not conducive to working from home may utilize COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave (SPSL), if eligible, or their own paid leave balances or absent without pay (AWP) during the self-quarantine period.

During a critical staffing shortage, certain employees, including critical infrastructure workers and emergency response workers, may discontinue quarantine and report back to the workplace after day seven (7) following a COVID-19 exposure if: (1) the employee did not present any symptoms associated with COVID-19 during the quarantine period; (2) the employee received a PCR COVID-19 test no earlier than the day five (5) following the COVID-19 exposure; and (3) that test produced a negative result. Employees returning seven (7) days after last known exposure are required to wear a surgical mask in the workplace, practice strict physical distancing, and self-monitor for symptoms through day fourteen (14). If the employee experiences any symptoms during this time, they must self-isolate immediately and should seek a test.

C. When can an employee return to work after testing positive or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?**

Employees who have tested positive or experience COVID-19 symptoms** cannot return to work until all the following have occurred:

- At least 24 hours have passed since a fever of 100.4 or higher has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- COVID-19 symptoms have improved.
- At least 10 days have passed since COVID-19 symptoms first appeared.

COVID-19 cases who tested positive but never developed COVID-19 symptoms will not return to work until a minimum of 10 days have passed since the date of specimen collection of their first positive COVID-19 test.

Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 and were isolated or have had a close contact* exposure to a COVID-19 case and quarantined, will not be required to provide a negative COVID-19 test when returning to work.

D. Should employees returning from travel come to work?

Maybe. Employees should avoid travelling long distances for vacations or pleasure as much as possible. Recognizing that some travel is inevitable, employees should refer to the CDC website for international and domestic travel guidance and restrictions.

[International Travel Information can be located here.](#)

[Domestic Travel Information can be located here.](#)

E. Does the City provide COVID-19 testing to employees?

The City will offer COVID-19 testing at no cost to employees who have had a workplace exposure.

4. HOW CAN I KEEP MY EMPLOYEES SAFE?

A. I supervise employees who cannot telecommute, what steps can I take to protect them?

- (1) Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick;
- (2) Have employees follow requirements for the use of face coverings;
- (3) Send home immediately employees with symptoms of COVID-19**;
- (4) Continue to provide information and training on social distancing while at work, including staying six-feet apart when possible, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve, elbow, or tissue, not hands), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands; and
- (5) Implement flexible hours when possible to increase physical distance between employees, so long as the hours are consistent with applicable labor agreements.

B. Can an employee refuse to come to work because they are afraid of being exposed to COVID-19?

If an employee is afraid of contracting the virus and is not symptomatic or part of a high-risk group themselves, employees can request a personal leave of absence and utilize any accrued leave (except sick leave). Personal leaves of absence are not eligible for absent without pay (AWP).

The City's Leave Administration Policy permits employees to request up to three (3) months off for a personal leave of absence in a 12-month designated period. The Department of Human Resources, Leave Administration Unit will determine eligibility.

Employees who have a serious health condition, as defined by the law, may request a medical leave of absence.

C. Can an employee refuse to come to work because they live with someone who is in a high-risk category?

If an employee is afraid of contracting the virus and passing it along to a relative or cohabitant in the high-risk category but is not symptomatic or part of a high-risk group themselves, they

can request a personal leave of absence and utilize any accrued leave. Personal leaves of absence are not eligible for absent without pay (AWP).

The City's Leave Administration Policy permits employees to request up to three (3) months off for a personal leave of absence in a 12-month designated period. The Department of Human Resources, Leave Administration Unit will determine eligibility.

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)/California Family Rights Act (CFRA), if an employee is caring for a qualifying family member with a serious health condition, employees can request a family care leave of absence.

The City's Leave Administration Policy permits employees to request up to four (4) months of family care leave in a 12-month designated period. The Department of Human Resources, Leave Administration Unit will determine eligibility.

D. If an employee utilizes unpaid leave for the reasons stated in B or C above, will they be required to pay for their health benefits?

Employees who are on an unprotected leave and who are in an unpaid status will have their health benefits terminated and be offered to continue their health benefits under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). Under COBRA, employees are responsible for 100% of their health premium cost.

In certain instances, employees may owe the City for health benefit premiums paid on their behalf prior to the termination of their health benefits.

Employees who are on a protected leave (e.g., FMLA) and who are in an unpaid status are required to reimburse the City for their regular bi-weekly out-of-pocket health benefit premiums.

If you find that this FAQ does not answer your COVID-19 related workplace questions, please contact your Labor Relations Officer.

** Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection.*

*** An employee experiencing symptoms does not have to self-isolate if ALL of the following are met:*

- 1) The symptoms experienced do not include fever, shortness of breath/difficultly breathing, OR new loss of taste or smell.*
- 2) Has received a negative PCR COVID-19 test result.*
- 3) Has not had a close contact* exposure to a COVID-19 case.*