

COVID-19 FAQs FOR SUPERVISORS

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Administrative Entity

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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. The California Occupational Safety Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) reinforces the importance of not coming to work and obtaining a COVID-19 test if an employee experiences symptoms. 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. If tests are available, one may be provided to the employee free of charge.

Some employees who exhibit two 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 and if tests are available, one may be provided to the employee free of charge.

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

Notify your Department Director and Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Specialist immediately.

D. If someone is sent home, are we required to disinfect their workspace?

No, although it is recommended.

E. Can I take an employee's temperature?

Yes. You may measure an employee's temperature with the employee's permission 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?

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, the employee does not need to self-isolate.

Those symptoms are:

- 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 any of the following symptoms, they should be removed from the workplace and take a COVID-19 test. If tests are available, one may be provided to the employee free of charge.

- 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
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Sore throat

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 and EH&S Specialist 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 had 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 and take a COVID-19 test. If tests are available, one may be provided to the employee free of charge.

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?

Generally, no. Most employees will not need to be sent home if they remain free of symptoms, take a COVID-19 test within day three and day five from the last day of close contact, and wear face a covering around others in the workplace through day 10. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) quarantine requirements will be referenced on a case-by-case basis.

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

- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must be removed from the workplace for at least five days after start of symptoms or after date of first positive test if no symptoms.
- Isolation can end and employees may return to the workplace after day five if symptoms are not present or are resolving, and a negative COVID-19 test result is received from a specimen collected on day five or later.
- If an employee's test on day five or later is positive, isolation can end, and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10 if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If an employee is unable or choosing not to test, isolation can end, and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10 if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If an employee has a fever, isolation must continue, and the employee may not return to work until 24 hours after the fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If an employee's symptoms other than fever are not resolving, they may not return to the workplace until their symptoms are resolving or until after day 10.
- Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days from the day of last close contact.

¹ Notification will be made to parties identified in California AB 685/Labor Code 6409.6, as amended.

D. 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, develop symptoms, or are part of an exposed group in an outbreak.

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, when applicable;
- (3) Send home immediately employees with symptoms of COVID-19;
- (4) Continue to provide information on 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 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), employees who have a serious health condition may request a medical leave of absence.

The City's Leave Administration Policy permits employees to take up to six months of medical leave in a 12-month designated period. The Department of Human Resources, Leave Administration Unit will determine eligibility.

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 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 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 six feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from two days before illness onset or, for asymptomatic employees, two days prior to test specimen collection.*