
GUIDANCE FOR RESTAURANTS RESPONDING TO COVID-19 POSITIVE EMPLOYEE¹

1. Addressing employees who are sick

Make sure that employees know they **should not come to work** if they are sick and should notify their manager or other designated COVID-19 point of contact. If an employee becomes sick while at work with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), tests positive for COVID-19, or has been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms (fever, headache, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath), the employee should notify his or her supervisor or other designated COVID-19 point of contact.

2. What to do when employees at work present COVID-19 symptoms

Immediately separate employees who have COVID-19 [symptoms](#). Sick individuals should go home or to a health-care facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others](#) who are sick. Employees should not return to work until they meet the criteria — in consultation with their health-care provider — to [discontinue home isolation](#).

3. What to do with asymptomatic COVID-19-exposed employees

Critical Infrastructure employees who've been exposed but remain asymptomatic could be asked to stay home for 14 days from the last exposure, or they may be [allowed to return to work following these precautions](#):

- A designee takes the employee's temperature and assesses symptoms prior to starting each shift
- The employee self-monitors throughout the day, on alert for symptoms
- The employee wears a face mask while in the workplace and washes hands often
- The employee practices social distancing and maintains a 6-foot separation as work duties permit
- The operation increases the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces
- If the employee becomes sick during the day, he or she is immediately sent home

4. How to begin contact-tracing employees exposed to COVID-19

Contact trace within your operation to determine potential exposure. You can ask a COVID-19-positive employee which coworkers he or she was in "close contact" with (within [6 feet for more than 15 minutes](#)) during the prior two weeks, or check shift schedules.

The Georgia Department of Public Health (GaDPH) has implemented a [contact tracing program](#) called *Healthy Georgia Collaborative* to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

1. When GaDPH is notified of a case (a person with confirmed COVID-19), the case is interviewed and asked to identify people they had close contact with (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) beginning two (2) days before they became ill.

2. GaDPH will then reach out to these individuals either by phone or text message to inform them that they have come in contact with someone with COVID-19 and enroll them in symptom monitoring.
 - a. Individuals will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days after their last contact with the case, monitor their symptoms and report any symptoms through a text messaging system, or by calling GaDPH if unable to text.
 - b. Individuals who develop symptoms during the course of their symptom monitoring will be asked to isolate themselves at home and will be referred for COVID-19 testing, or to seek medical care if necessary.

All information collected through GaDPH Contact Tracing is provided voluntarily and will be kept confidential according to HIPAA standards.

5. Notify health officials and close contacts when an employee tests positive

You are not required to report a COVID-positive employee to the Georgia Department of Public Health, however, you can be proactive and [notify your County Environmental Health Department](#). There may be a gap in time between when a positive result is given and when GaDPH receives the information.

Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. As critical infrastructure, you may also allow COVID-19 exposed asymptomatic employees to return to work with the precautions outlined above. They are also in the CDC [Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#).

6. Cleaning and disinfecting the area

Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use those areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#) them.

Wait at least 24 hours before [cleaning and disinfecting](#). If 24 hours isn't feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe, correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#).

7. Permitting the return to work

You may ask for a "fitness for duty/return to work" medical clearance note prior to a sick employee returning for work.

¹ This document provides general guidance on strategies employers could consider in preparation for a potential COVID-19 positive employee. It should not be construed as legal, medical or human resource advice, but rather as a resource for employers needing to take quick action. The electronic version of this document contains the relevant links, as of August 12, 2020, to the CDC, OSHA, EPA, and EEOC pages.