



How to Respond If an Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

The following steps for responding when an employee tests positive for the coronavirus are based on the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employees](#) as of July 2020.

1

Immediate Response



- Employees who have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, vendors, and visitors, and sent home.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should NOT return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#). The recommendation is to self-isolate for 14 days unless there are symptoms.

2

Protect Other Employees



- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure but maintain confidentiality as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). Unless the affected employee allows to share his/her name.
- Fellow employees should self-monitor for symptoms, including daily temperature checks.
- Identify where the infected employee worked, as well as those individuals—including colleagues, customers, visitors, and vendors—the infected employee came into contact with during the 14 days prior to testing positive or first displaying symptoms.
- Employers should notify affected customers, visitors, and vendors and instruct those employees who came into contact with the sick employee within the 14 day period to go home and self-isolate for 14 days, working remotely if possible. If self-isolation is not possible, the individuals should self-monitor for symptoms, including daily temperature checks.
- Employees should NOT return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met. The [CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers](#) may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented.

2 cont.

Protect Other Employees



- OSHA recordkeeping requirements mandate covered employers record certain work-related injuries and illnesses on their OSHA 300 log. [OSHA released new guidance May 19](#) that employers are responsible for recording a COVID-19 case if it is confirmed as a COVID-19 illness, is [work-related](#), and involves one or more of the [general recording criteria](#), such as medical treatment beyond first aid or days away from work.
- COVID-19 TESTING: If you decide to require or employees inquire about testing for your employees who were in contact with an affected individuals, please take the following into consideration:
 - The presence of a virus may not appear in an individual's blood until 3-5 days after the exposure. The incubation period is up to 14 days so there are no absolutes on the accuracy of these tests and the time at which they are taken.
 - Employees should contact their telemedicine provider or primary care doctor to request a test. It will be covered at \$0 copay by an insurance plan if found medically necessary by a treating physician depending on your location, there MAY be a shortage of tests in US thus the priority will be given to individuals with symptoms and essential workers.
 - Most of the vendors with on-site or drive through testing abilities will bill your insurance for the tests. This does not guarantee that there will be no balance bill for the event. Please contact your Burnham team to help you schedule the event and inquire about coverage.

3

Workplace Environment



- Based on the size of the workplace and the potential breadth of exposure to coronavirus, the employer should consider closing immediately, coordinating with employees to work remotely if possible.
- Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in your facility, following [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).
- Employers should develop policies for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks. Training should include when to use personal protective equipment, what PPE is necessary, how to properly wear, use, and take off PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with appropriate [OSHA standards](#).
- Collaborate with local and state health departments to ensure appropriate protocols and guidelines, such as updated/ additional guidance for cleaning and disinfection, are followed, including for identification of new potential cases of COVID-19.
- Consider reaching out to your Workers Compensation and EPLI insurance carriers to inform them of the positive test.

Additional Resources:

- * **Burnham Benefits COVID-19 Response Team:** www.burnhambenefits.com/covid-19
- * **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019
- * **United States Department of Labor:** <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- * **World Health Organization:** www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- * **Public health Departments:** www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/LocalHealthServicesAndOffices