



Protocol for Protecting Employees from Potential Exposure to COVID-19

Return to Work Protocols

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has developed guidelines for essential employees working in positions of critical infrastructure who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus on the job. To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, 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 to protect them and the community. This protocol is based on current CDC guidelines and supporting material/sources from public health officials. It will be modified accordingly should recommendations change. In addition, the CDC has issued guidelines specific to job functions that may be more restrictive than those listed in this protocol. Health Care personnel should refer to “Work restrictions for Health Care Personnel with potential exposure.

COVID-19 is believed to spread through respiratory droplets among close contacts. A potential exposure means having close contact with (being within 6 feet for a period of 15 minutes or more), **or** having direct contact with respiratory droplets of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having close contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (above 99.9 degrees), cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.

1. Protocol to Protect Employees from Workplace Exposure

Employees must follow the safety protocol already in place while at City worksites, including:

- Social distancing,
- Covering coughs and sneezes,
- Maintaining hand hygiene,
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and/or shared equipment/workspaces, and
- Staying home when sick/monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms.

Employees whose duties require them to work in the field should use caution in interacting with members of the public:

- If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from members of the public.
- Avoid touching surfaces often touched by the public.

- If job duties require the touching of surfaces/equipment accessible to the public, practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces following the directions on the cleaning product's label.
- Proper hand hygiene is an important infection control measure. Employees should regularly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Key times to clean hands include:
 - Before, during, and after preparing food
 - Before eating food
 - After using the toilet
 - After blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Additional workplace-specific times to clean hands include:
 - Before and after work shifts
 - Before and after work breaks
 - After touching frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and handrails
- Avoid contact with body fluids.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use gloves, masks, and other PPE as appropriate and per City safety procedures.

2. Return to Work Protocol for Post-Exposure, Asymptomatic Employees

Employees who believe they have or may have been exposed to COVID-19 through close contact with a symptomatic individual or someone who has tested positive for the virus, must inform the [**the Human Resources Manager and/or the City Manager**] as soon as possible. If a known exposure or potential exposure occurred away from the City worksite, the employee must inform the [**the Human Resources Manager and/or the City Manager**] prior to reporting or returning to work at a City worksite.

Current CDC guidance advises that to ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, critical infrastructure workers are permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, *provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are employed*. Accordingly, employees in this situation generally may remain at work and must adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

- **Pre-Screen:** The City shall measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to the employee entering the facility and/or starting work.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee does not have a temperature or symptoms, they must self-monitor (as described below) under the supervision of the City's occupational health program.

- **Wear a Mask:** The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after exposure or potential exposure. The City shall supply facemasks, if available. Employee-supplied cloth face coverings or masks may be used in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should practice social distancing, including maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others, as work duties permit.
- **Disinfect and Clean Work Spaces:** Areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment must be cleaned and disinfected routinely.

Self-monitoring means that these employees should monitor themselves for fever by taking their temperature twice a day and remaining alert for respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat). All employees who are self-monitoring must contact [**the Human Resources Manager and/or the City Manager**] if they develop a fever or respiratory symptoms during the self-monitoring period to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

3. **Return to Work Protocol for Symptomatic Employees with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19**

If an employee becomes sick during their shift, he or she will be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected.

If the employee tests positive for the virus, information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others who have had close contact with the employee during this time would be considered potentially exposed. These additional employees will be informed of the possibility of exposure, but confidentiality of the medical information of the ill employee will be maintained. Those other potentially exposed employees should follow the advice at the beginning of this sub-section.

The CDC sets forth two criteria for return to work if an employee has been determined to have COVID-19 based on either the employee's symptoms or a positive test for COVID-19.

1. *Test-based strategy.* Employees will be excluded from work until:
 - Fever is resolved (99.9 degrees or below) without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) has occurred, **and**

- Receipt of negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) or by any method subsequently recommended by the CDC Guidelines on Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

2. *Time-based strategy.* Employees will be excluded from work until:

- At least **3 days** (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as resolution of fever (99.9 degrees or below) without the use of fever-reducing medications *and* improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **and**
- At least **10 days** (or any subsequently revised time frame recommended under CDC Guidelines on Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19) have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

If the employee was never tested for COVID-19 but has an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.

4. Return to Work Protocol for Non-Symptomatic Employees Who Have Tested Positive for Covid-19

The revised CDC Guidelines provide that employees who have tested positive but have not had any symptoms of COVID-19 for should not return to work unless they meet one of the two criteria:

1. *Test based strategy.* Employees will be excluded from work until they have received negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) or by any method subsequently recommended by CDC Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
2. *Time based strategy.* At least **10 days** (or any subsequently revised time frame recommended under CDC Guidelines on Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19) have passed since the date of the employee's first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.

Upon returning to work after an absence due to COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result, employees must:

- **Wear a facemask** at all times while at work until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.

- **Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.**
- **Self-monitor** for symptoms and seeks re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

If an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 or been advised by a physician that he or she likely has the virus, being at the workplace may create a direct threat to coworkers. Thus, it is imperative that employees follow this protocol prior to returning to work.

In addition, the City may request a return-to-work certification from a treating physician in order to protect all employees and the public from exposure. Returning to the workplace when an employee knows that he or she is sick with the virus, possibly exposing others to the virus, could be grounds for disciplinary action.

07/07/2020



EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION TO RETURN TO WORK AFTER EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 OR SUSPICION OF HAVING OR BEING EXPOSED TO COVID-19 VIRUS

(May be used if a Doctor's Note is not practicable)

I, _____, certify that I have been free of fever (a "fever" is defined as above 99.9° F using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other COVID-19 related symptoms (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants) and, at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. I understand that if I do show further signs of having COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath), I must inform my supervisor immediately and the City of Turlock may either direct me to stay away from work or may require me to undergo a fitness for duty examination at the City of Turlock's expense and according to the City of Turlock's policy regarding fitness for duty examinations.

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature Department

Date

Human Resources Signature

Date