

## What to do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19

### Contract Tracing

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is implementing a contact tracing program called *Healthy Georgia Collaborative* to help stop the spread of COVID-19. [Georgia Contact Tracing FAQ](#)

1. When DPH 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. DPH 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 DPH 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.

Please note: All information collected through DPH Contact Tracing is provided voluntarily and will be kept confidential according to HIPAA standards.

\*\*\* You are not required to report a COVID-positive employee, 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 Georgia DPH receives the information.

### Georgia Department of Public Health

[Quarantine Guidance: What to do if you were exposed to someone with the novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

### CDC

[Considerations for Restaurants and Bars](#)

[General Business COVID-19 FAQ](#)

[COVID-19 FAQ](#)

### What should I do if an employee comes to work with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath)?

Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home. Employees who develop symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home.

Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with a healthcare provider and state or local health department.

Employers should not require sick employees to provide a COVID-19 test result or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.

Source: [General Business COVID-19 FAQ](#)

### **What should I do if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?**

In most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility. But do close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person:

- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.

Follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#):

- Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting them.
- To disinfect surfaces, use products that meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- Always wear gloves and gowns appropriate for the chemicals being used when you are cleaning and disinfecting.
- You may need to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE) depending on the setting and disinfectant product you are using.

In addition to cleaning and disinfecting, employers should determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and need to take additional precautions:

- Most workplaces should follow the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#).
- Critical infrastructure workplaces should follow the guidance [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#).

Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with a healthcare provider and state or local health department.

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Source: [General Business COVID-19 FAQ](#)

### **What should I do if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?**

Employees may have been exposed if they are a “close contact” of someone who infected, which is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time:

- Potentially exposed employees who **have** symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and follow [CDC recommended steps](#).
- Potentially exposed employees who **do not have** symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.

All other employees should self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home.

See [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#) for more information.

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them and the community.

- Critical infrastructure businesses have an obligation to limit, to the extent possible, the reintegration of in-person workers who have been exposed to COVID-19 but remain symptom-free in ways that best protect the health of the worker, their co-workers, and the general public.
- An analysis of core job tasks and workforce availability at worksites can allow the employer to match core activities to other equally skilled and available in-person workers who have not been exposed.
- A critical infrastructure worker who is symptom-free and returns to work should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.

See [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#) for more information.

Source: [General Business COVID-19 FAQ](#)

### **What should I do if I find out several days later, after an employee worked, that they were diagnosed with COVID-19?**

- If it has been **less than 7 days** since the sick employee used the facility, clean and disinfect all areas used by the sick employee following the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

- If it has been **7 days or more** since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routinely cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces in the facility.
- Other employees may have been exposed to the virus if they were in "close contact" (within approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) of the sick employee for a prolonged period of time.
  - Those who have symptoms should self-isolate and follow [CDC recommended steps](#).
  - In most workplaces, those potentially exposed but with no symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.
  - Critical infrastructure workers should follow [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#). A critical infrastructure worker who is symptom-free and returns to work should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- Employees not considered exposed should self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home.

Source: [General Business COVID-19 FAQ](#)

### **How long do companies need to close for disinfection after an exposure? How long before other workers can come back to work?**

Companies do not necessarily need to close after a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 has been in a company facility. The area(s) used or visited by the ill person should be closed for 24 hours or as long as possible. Open outside doors and windows as much as possible ensuring that doing so does not pose a safety risk to children using the facility (i.e. make sure that children are not able to enter the closed off area through any windows or doors). and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Once the area has been [appropriately disinfected](#), it can be opened for use. Workers without close contact with the person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 can return to work immediately after disinfection is completed.

Source: [CDC COVID-19 FAQ](#)