

# WORK PLACE GUIDELINES

## FOR COVID 19 IN TALBOT COUNTY

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### WHAT DO YOU DO IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS SYMPTOMS OF FEVER, COUGH, AND SHORTNESS OF BREATH (SYMPTOMS OF COVID 19)?

1. If at home, the employee should stay at home.
2. If at the office, the employee should go home immediately and call health care provider for guidance
3. A COVID 19 test will hopefully be done to help in managing the symptomatic employee and their contacts but a test may not be done due to the limited availability if the symptoms are mild. However, regardless of whether the test is done or not, the employee must continue isolation at home under the following conditions:
  - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
  - At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

(If we had convenient and rapid tests, providers would do a test at the end of 7 days to demonstrate the virus is no longer present. However, at this time in the US we do not have enough tests to do these follow-up tests often and the results may not be available for up to 10 days. But should testing capability increase, then tests to assure the virus is no longer present would be done.)

4. If the COVID 19 test is negative, then no further precautions are needed for your staff. However, continue to practice social distancing (6 feet apart, frequent hand washing and wiping down surfaces with disinfectant.
5. If the COVID 19 test is positive, the health department is notified and begins contact tracing. This involves talking with the sick employee and then talking with any of your employees that have been named as contacts to evaluate whether the exposure risk was high, medium or low. The health department will make recommendations for you and your employees.

While waiting on the results of the COVID 19 test, the best practice would be to

- A. Have potentially exposed workers wear a mask (cloth mask is adequate) while at work and at home to protect others in case they might be infected
- B. Monitor their temperature twice a day and be alert for any cough or shortness of breath

- C. If symptoms develop or if temperature is greater than 100.4 degrees, the employee should stay at home and call their healthcare provider for guidance

### **WHAT DOES A SUPERVISOR DO IF AN EMPLOYEE STATES THAT HE/SHE HAS BEEN A CLOSE CONTACT OF A PERSON WITH COVID 19?**

1. First you want to confirm that the person truly was a contact of a known case. Rumors can often make people think they have been a contact to a known case. If this employee has not already been contacted by the health department, then have that person call the health department to report his contact with the “known” case. Note that the employer doesn’t ask who the infected individual is. Instead the employee calls the health department to discuss this contact because the health department will know if the named person has been reported positive.
2. The health department will be talking with all that have been named as contacts and this is especially important for co-workers. The employer will be contacted also. Specific recommendations will be provided depending upon the timing, type, and length of contact with the person diagnosed with COVID 19.

**TESTING:** Testing is limited at this time but in Talbot County,

1. Your health provider must order the test and has been given the priorities for making these orders by Maryland Department of Health.
2. Once the health provider has ordered a test, the provider may take the swab of the nose/throat in the office, refer the person to the hospital to have a specimen taken, or send the person to an alternative drive by site when available.
3. The results of the tests are reported to the Talbot County Health Department and the healthcare provider that ordered the test. The health department follows-up on all positives and does contact tracing. (When/if cases become numerous, limited staff prevent contact tracing on all cases. Further guidance will be given if this occurs.)

### **GENERAL PREVENTION**

1. Only essential workers are supposed to be on site or in the field.
2. Virtual work and meetings should be used instead of face to face meetings.
3. While onsite, the work place should be well cleaned and employees should wipe down surfaces with a disinfectant at least twice a day – including desk tops, computer keyboards, telephones, cell phones.....
4. Employees should be spaced 6 feet apart and not gather in groups while at worksite. You can alternate the workers on site when possible. Doors to individual offices should be closed. Practice social distancing in the work place.
5. Have hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes available for employees.
6. Frequent hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds should be encouraged with use of hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) between hand washing.
7. Employees should be encouraged to cough or sneeze in their bent elbow or into a tissue which is immediately discarded and not left lying around. They should immediately wash or sanitize their hands.
8. Encourage employees not to touch their face and eyes with their hands.

9. CDC is now encouraging everyone to wear a cloth mask when near others. Our essential workers should wear a mask to protect fellow workers if they are infected. This is now recommended due to the wide spread of the virus now.

***GUIDELINES CAN RARELY COVER EVERY SCENARIO. IF EMPLOYERS HAVE QUESTIONS, THEY CAN CALL THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND ASK FOR AN INFECTION CONTROL NURSE.***