



Office of State Human Resources

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OSHR Model Workplace COVID-19 Program

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**SUBJECT: COVID-19 WORKPLACE PROGRAM FOR NON-HEALTHCARE AND
NON-CORRECTIONS/CUSTODY WORKSITES**

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/05/2020

REVISION DATE: 1/5/2022; 6/6/2022; 8/1/2022

SCOPE:

The purpose of this program is to establish general guidelines for AGENCY programs for COVID-19 pertaining to non-mandatory state employees reporting to work at non-healthcare and non-corrections/custody worksites to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure to state employees, visitors, contractors, vendors, and volunteers entering State owned and leased property.

PROGRAM STATEMENT:

Per the OSHA general duty clause, it is the responsibility of employers to protect employees from anticipated worksite hazards. This program establishes minimum standards for COVID-19 safety within AGENCY based upon OSHA rules, regulations, and guidance and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance, Executive Orders, DHHS Guidance, and other regulatory measures to protect health and safety of all persons present at worksites. Changing circumstances may require agencies to be flexible and alter their original plans to ensure public health and safety. Individual worksites within an AGENCY may adopt additional or enhanced requirements. **PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED UPON REVISED GUIDANCE FROM GOVERNMENT ENTITIES.**

DEFINITIONS:

Agency: State department, division, subdivision, commission, board, or institution.

Social Distancing: Actions taken to reduce the opportunities for close contact between people in order to limit the spread of a communicable disease.

Fully vaccinated: It has been two weeks since someone has received the second dose of a two-dose vaccine or two weeks after receiving a one-dose vaccine.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Agency Head/Designee

- Establish processes and procedures necessary to support COVID-19 measures enumerated in this program.

- Maintain flexibility to alter established processes and procedures to ensure public health and safety, which includes having a contingency plan if return to teleworking is deemed necessary.
- Direct worksite COVID-19 risk assessments per guidelines of this Program.

Human Resources Department

- Establish and maintain process to handle employee COVID-19 related requests for accommodations including recordkeeping of requests received and response to all requests.
- Respond to employees/supervisors' concerns regarding any COVID-19 related safety matter that may range from physical environment to how to address an employee's failure to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines i.e., refusal to wear face covering (if required), maintain six feet social distance, etc.
- Administer process for response to **COVID-19 positive employee** at worksite including removing employee from worksite, appropriate worksite notification, cleaning protocols, and establishing return date.
- Administer process for response to **COVID-19 symptomatic employee** at worksite including removing employee from worksite, cleaning protocols, and establishing return date.

Safety Director or Designee

- Perform worksite health and safety risk assessments per guidelines of this Program.
- Support implementation of COVID-19 measures as directed by management.
- Provide consultation and assistance to employees and management to address COVID-19 related concerns.

Middle Managers/Supervisors

- Respond to employee COVID-19 concerns to extent possible.
- Direct employees to Human Resources staff for requests for accommodation related to COVID-19 measures.
- Ensure employees returning to worksite receive information regarding COVID-19 related measures in effect at individual worksites such as use of cloth face coverings, social distancing requirements, reporting of COVID-19 symptomatic employees, and NC EAP contact information.
- Ensure employees, contractors/vendors, and any other persons present at individual worksites are trained regarding COVID-19 related safety requirements.
- Alert next level manager on duty when nonadherent persons refuse to comply with any COVID-19 safety requirements after providing verbal and/or written notice thereof.
- Support implementation of COVID-19 measures as directed by management.

Employees

- Comply with directives of this Program.
- Complete required training related to COVID-19 measures.
- Contact supervisor or Human Resources staff regarding COVID-19 concerns as appropriate.
- Direct requests for accommodations to Human Resources staff.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The guidance included herein may be further defined and revised upon issuance of updated federal and state government law and guidance.

1. Face Covering Requirements – information as of August 1, 2022
SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON STATE LAW OR EXECUTIVE ORDER CURRENTLY IN EFFECT

Each agency may set its own face covering policy for guests and employees in their offices, buildings, and facilities. Employees refusing to comply with an agency's face covering policy may be subject to disciplinary measures.

All employees and guests are welcome to wear a face covering at any time.

Employees required to work in increased risk settings with possible close contact with COVID-19 positive individuals or infected materials must be supplied the appropriate PPE and training for proper use by the agency. Such PPE is provided to onsite state employees at no charge.

Employees may utilize cloth face coverings and other PPE of their choice that do not interfere with completion of work duties so long as it is in good taste and any designs, graphics, or logos present a professional image acceptable to the general public.

Agencies may provide disposable face coverings for customers/visitors to wear while onsite.

2. Social Distancing
Breakrooms/Kitchens

Individual agencies will determine whether kitchen/breakrooms will be available for employee use. If kitchen/breakroom is available, stagger occupancy and wash your hands.

Vending Machines

Individual agencies will determine whether vending machines will be supplied and operational. If vending machines are supplied and operational, wash your hands after use.

Fitness Facilities

Individual agencies will determine when fitness facilities will be available for employee use.

Lactation Rooms

Individual agencies will determine when lactation rooms will be available for employee use.

Conference Rooms/Classrooms

Agencies may opt to utilize in-person meetings or videoconferencing technology solutions or a combination of both.

In-person Meetings

Agencies may opt to utilize in-person meetings or videoconferencing technology solutions or a combination of both.

Travel

Individual agencies are responsible for granting travel requests given current State government travel rules.

Shared Vehicles

For those who need or want to travel with more than one occupant in a vehicle, the following recommendations should be observed:

- Employees should perform a health self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms as identified by their agency when using a vehicle to go to work, when leaving work to go to another destination, and again when using the vehicle to return.
- All employees are welcome to wear a face covering while traveling in a shared vehicle.

Discuss any questions with your supervisor or Agency Human Resources Office.

3. Symptom Screening for Onsite Employees

State agencies may adopt procedures regarding on-site employee participation in COVID-19 symptom screening. Detailed written procedures should be published and accessible to all employees.

When arriving at worksites, employees may be instructed to use designated entrances to undergo a health screening. The health screening process may include a symptom screening checklist, on-site temperature check, or other measures.

Information provided by employees during any COVID-19 screening process related to underlying health conditions, medical certification, doctor's notes, etc., is confidential and the employer should designate a person on site to ensure this information is protected.

All employees (trained medical staff or others) involved in any screening process must have proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and adhere to CDC Guidance for safe communicable disease screening procedures.

Such procedures may include disciplinary measures for failure to comply or for providing erroneous and misleading information.

4. Mandatory COVID-19 Testing

SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON STATE LAW OR EXECUTIVE ORDER CURRENTLY IN EFFECT

Per *OSHR Policy on Face Coverings and on Vaccination or Testing*, agency heads may, in their discretion, continue to require testing for Workers who are not *Fully Vaccinated* consistent with this Policy in those settings that the agency head determines to be high-risk to employees, the public, or others. Such places may include, but are not limited to, long term care facilities, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and health care facilities. Federal rule may also require testing, in certain settings, for Workers who are not *Fully Vaccinated*.

Employees with disabilities that impair or prevent vaccination, employees who are not recommended by a physician to be vaccinated, and employees with a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance that is inconsistent with vaccination may request a reasonable accommodation from the proof of vaccination requirement by contacting their agency's Human Resources office.

Unless an exception applies, employees may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this requirement.

5. Ongoing Hygiene/Prevention Practices

Agencies may continue utilizing ongoing COVID-19 safety measures at their worksite including:

- Recommending employees and guests wear a face covering at all times.
- Recommending and facilitating vaccination of employees.

- Requiring employees to observe room occupancy limits and maintain social distance whether fully vaccinated or not.
- Restrictions on number of visitors, or visits by appointment only.
- Barriers in public-facing areas to separate employees and visitors.
- Increased access to hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray or wipes, or other cleaning products.
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces at least once a day.
- Posting informational signs to explain importance of COVID-19 safety practices.
- Directional signs on floors to define traffic flow or ensure six feet of space between people.
- Limits on the number of people in confined spaces, such as elevators, lobby or meeting rooms.
- Temporarily closing shared spaces such as kitchens, breakrooms, fitness rooms, etc.
- Assigning employees to individual workspaces in a new location.
- Altering physical layout of a worksite.

6. **Worksite Cleaning Practices**

Ongoing awareness and partnership between employees and agencies to prevent the physical spread of COVID-19 at worksites will help maintain a healthy workforce is recommended including the following:

- Provide job safety analysis to protect employees conducting cleaning operations.
- Provide appropriate PPE and training for all cleaning duties.
- Secure PPE/supplies storage and designate specific staff to manage stock and distribute items.
- Provide individual workspaces with necessary cleaning/disinfection and PPE supplies to reduce supply room visits.
- Preferably, COVID-19 disinfection services should occur after hours to ensure all areas can be accessed.
- Building and workspace closures until disinfection work is completed is at the discretion of the agency.
- Increased sanitation in restrooms.
- Agencies in leased spaces should work with property managers regarding these requirements.
- Hand sanitizer available at entry and high-traffic locations for employee and visitor use.
- Encourage employees to use disinfectant wipes or cleaner after contact with high-touch surfaces and shared-use items to help maintain a safe work environment, and to wash their hands.

7. **Handling of COVID-19 Positive/Symptomatic Employees**

Check Most Recently Revised CDC Guidelines for Updated Information

Maintain a plan to immediately and temporarily isolate at the worksite any employee(s) who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or illness while awaiting safe transport to their home or a healthcare facility. The employee should be sent home with the most recently updated CDC guidelines regarding quarantine, self-isolation, and directions to seek assessment and guidance from their medical provider.

Follow most recently updated [CDC COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidance updated March 30, 2022](#) regarding when the employee should return to onsite work.

8. **Worksite Cleaning Response for COVID-19 Symptomatic/Positive Employee**

Check Most Recently Revised CDC Guidelines for Updated Information

If less than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space.

If more than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough. Agencies may choose to also disinfect depending on certain conditions or everyday practices required by the agency.

If more than 3 days have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

Call housekeeping or vendor to request cleaning/disinfection services for work areas used by the symptomatic/positive employee.

Untrained agency employees should not participate in cleaning or disinfecting of affected areas as this process follows specific and rigorous protocols.

For questions: State-owned facilities in Wake County should call the Wake County Epidemiology Task Force, 919-856-7032. State agencies located in other counties should contact local departments, contact information available at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/county-health-departments>. Callers should explain that they are calling per OSHR guidance to contact their local health department so that the agency can confirm that they are taking appropriate control measures, sanitation, etc., as recommended by the local health department.

[CDC COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility Guidance updated November 15, 2021](#)

9. Handling of COVID-19 Positive Employee Notification to Others at Worksite **Check Most Recently Revised CDC Guidelines for Updated Information**

When an agency is notified of a COVID-19 positive employee, agencies may send out a general email notification to employees emphasizing the need to continue COVID-19 prevention measures. A sample notification letter that may be adapted for agency use is included as Attachment A to this document.

A close contact is someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period 5 days or less before the infected person tested positive for COVID-19. For example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes. A sample notification letter for “close contacts” that may be adapted for agency use is included as Attachment B to this document.

Follow most recently updated [CDC COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidance updated March 30, 2022](#) regarding when the employee and close contacts should return to onsite work.

For additional information and training on contact identification, visit the CDC website [COVID-19 Contact Tracing Training \(cdc.gov\)](#)

10. Multi-agency Worksite COVID-19 Coordination

OSHR recommends that agency human resources directors, safety professionals and chief deputies in various agencies with shared worksites collaborate and adopt a mutually agreed upon COVID-19 response plan for that worksite to ensure proper handling of COVID-19 positive employees in buildings

with multiple state agency occupants. This agreement can be in an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) format between the agencies. Specifically, agencies should focus on:

1. Demonstrating and documenting how notification will be provided to all building occupants; and
2. Demonstrating and documenting how notification will be made and executed regarding worksite cleaning when notice is received of a COVID-19 positive employee assigned to that worksite.

11. Training

Provide COVID-19 education, prevention strategies, videos, webinars, social media postings, worksite posters, and FAQ's to educate employees, contractors, and other worksite visitors regarding COVID-19 safety and public health measures implemented by AGENCY.

12. Signage

Provide notice via email, agency intranet, public website, worksite posters, and other communications methods to all employees, contractors, and other worksite visitors that regularly work at an AGENCY worksite or are entering its premises of COVID-19 safety related behavioral expectations included in this Program. COVID-19 safety signage is available at [DHHS COVID-19 Communications Toolkit](#).

13. Physical Alterations to Worksites

After performing a health and safety risk assessment and BEFORE making any physical facility changes or enhancements to promote COVID-19 safety (i.e. installation of physical barriers, space reconfiguration, etc.), state agencies should:

- For State owned worksites: Obtain approval from State Construction or other appropriate building maintenance designee for approval of any physical changes to facilities as such alterations could potentially cause ADA, egress, and life safety issues.
- For leased worksites: Consult with the State Property Office, Leasing and Space Planning, and the property management company regarding such matters.

Each agency is responsible for ensuring adherence to applicable building and safety codes with regard to all proposed physical worksite alterations.

Agencies should consult with DOA Facilities Maintenance on their availability to assist with moving employees to alternate office space or moving furniture.

14. Procurement of COVID-19 Safety Items

Coordinate with DOA State Purchase and Contract (or other centralized purchasing entity) whenever possible to purchase cloth face coverings, disposable face coverings, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, disinfectant spray, and other necessary COVID-19 safety items for employee use at worksite.

15. HVAC Considerations

Communicate with DOA Facilities Maintenance, agency management, or building management for leased spaces regarding proper operation of building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that have been shut down or on setback, review new construction start-up guidance provided in ASHRAE Standard 180-2018, Standard Practice for the Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems. All adjustments and changes to building HVAC systems must be done by qualified facilities maintenance staff, contractors, or property manager.

Take steps to improve ventilation in the building:

- Increase percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for

both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).

- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
- Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
- Improve central air filtration:
 - Increase air filtration icon to as high as possible (MERV 13 or 14) without significantly diminishing design airflow.
 - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure appropriate filter fit and check for ways to minimize filter bypass.
- Consider running the building ventilation system even during unoccupied times to maximize dilution ventilation.
- Have staff work in areas served by “clean” ventilation zones that do not include higher-risk areas such as visitor reception or exercise facilities (if open).
- Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
- Consider using ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) as a supplement to help inactivate the virus.

16. Water System Considerations

Communicate with DOA Facilities Maintenance, agency management, or building management for leased spaces regarding potential water stagnation issues due to prolonged facility shut down and take appropriate remedial actions such as system flushing before employees return. For additional information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>.

17. OSHA Standards

All OSHA standards that apply to protecting workers from infection are applicable.

18. OSHA Reporting

Record work-related cases of COVID-19 illness on OSHA’s Form 300 logs if the following requirements are met:

- (1) the case is a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- (2) the case is work-related (as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5); and
- (3) the case involves one or more relevant recording criteria (set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7) (e.g., medical treatment, days away from work.)

For most recently updated COVID-19 OSHA reporting requirements, see <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/standards>

Employers must follow requirements in 29 CFR 1904 when reporting COVID-19 fatalities and hospitalizations to OSHA. <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1904>

Attachment A – Email Template for General Worksite Notification of COVID-19 Positive Employee

Memorandum

TO:

FROM:

RE: Notification of COVID-19 positive person at AGENCY/LOCATION

DATE:

On **(DAY or DATE)**, **AGENCY** was notified that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. The person was last onsite at **(NAME OF AGENCY WORKSITE)** on **(DAY or DATE)**. While the individual had minimal contact with other onsite employees, we are notifying you as a matter of transparency and to mitigate the spread of incorrect information.

To protect the health and safety of our workforce, please note that:

- **Close contacts:** Any employee(s) identified as a close contact of the infected employee (i.e., anyone within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period five days or less before the person provided a positive specimen) will be notified by agency and/or public health authorities and advised what to do.
- **Workspaces have been sanitized:** Workspaces utilized by the positive employee, including common areas and elevators, will be cleaned as recommended by CDC guidance.
- **Support your colleague's confidentiality:** Medical privacy laws impose strict confidentiality requirements regarding the specific identity of the positive employee. Please respect this by discouraging supposition or sharing misinformation.
- **Help ensure a safe workspace:** Regularly self-monitor your health for COVID-19 symptoms and do not come to work if you are sick. You are welcome to wear a face covering at all times while onsite.
- **COVID-19 Resources:** All state employees are encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and others. Accurate and regularly updated information about vaccination and other COVID-19 topics is available from at [NC.Gov COVID-19 Information Hub](#).
- **Access to EAP:** Any employee needing assistance with anxiety or other emotional concerns is encouraged to contact the N.C. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 888-298-3907 or 704-717-5295 to speak with an experienced, licensed counselor. This service is free to you and members of your household and completely confidential.

As a reminder, please perform a [self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms](#) prior to starting each workday. If you are ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay at home and notify your supervisor.

If you have not yet been vaccinated or are eligible for a booster, visit [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](#) to find a provider near your home or workplace. Be sure to wear a face covering and practice social distancing to minimize your risk of infection.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through these processes.

Attachment B - Email Template for Worksite Notification to Close Contact of COVID-19 Positive Employee

Memorandum

TO:

FROM:

RE: Notification of Potential Close Contact of COVID-19 positive person at AGENCY/LOCATION

DATE:

On (**DAY or DATE**), **AGENCY** was notified that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. The person was last onsite at (**NAME OF AGENCY WORKSITE**) on (**DAY or DATE**). You have been identified as a person at this worksite who may have had close contact (within six feet of person for a cumulative total of fifteen minutes or more during a twenty-four hour period) with this individual five days or less before the person had COVID-19 symptoms or provided a positive specimen.

As a result, you should now follow most recently updated CDC guidance at [CDC Quarantine and Isolation Guidance updated March 30, 2022](#).

To protect the health and safety of our workforce, please note that:

- **Workspaces have been sanitized:** Workspaces utilized by the positive employee, including common areas and elevators, will be cleaned as recommended by CDC guidance.
- **Support your colleague's confidentiality:** Medical privacy laws impose strict confidentiality requirements regarding the specific identity of the positive employee. Please respect this by discouraging supposition or sharing misinformation.
- **Help ensure a safe workspace:** Regularly self-monitor your health for COVID-19 symptoms and do not come to work if you are sick. You are welcome to wear a face covering at all times while onsite.
- **COVID-19 Resources:** All state employees are encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and others. Accurate and regularly updated information about vaccination and other COVID-19 topics is available at [NC.gov COVID-19 Info Hub](#).
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Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through these processes.