



What happens when an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 in Walla Walla County?

Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) conducts an interview with all people newly confirmed with a positive COVID-19 test result. This interview includes gathering information on demographics, symptoms, health and wellness history, employment or student status, exposure probability and timeline, close contacts and locations over past 14 days. Names and phone numbers for people who were in close contact are provided so our team can reach out to those close contacts to discuss the 14-day quarantine, provide helpful information on resources, healthcare referral, and symptoms to watch for over the next 2 weeks. A close contact is someone within 6 feet of positive COVID-19 case for more than 15 minutes.

People diagnosed with COVID-19 are encouraged to inform their employer and close contacts right away to bring awareness which can minimize the spread of COVID-19. Employers can immediately alert patrons and coworkers of the possible exposure and refer them to DCH COVID-19 helpline 509-524-2647 for guidance. Employers should cordon off the positive employee's workspace for a deep cleaning followed by sanitizing and disinfection, [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility | CDC](#).

DCH will contact employers to follow-up on close contacts, cleaning and disinfection processes and COVID-19 safety plans as well as answer any questions. Employers are encouraged to contact DCH COVID-19 helpline for guidance and support at 509-524-2647. Employers are required to call DCH at 509-524-2647 if there are 2 or more confirmed or suspect cases and if disease spread is suspected in the workplace.

Here are steps to take if a food worker is diagnosed with COVID-19:

1. **Immediately send the sick employee home. If they are calling in sick, make sure they stay home.** A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions for **10 days after symptoms begin AND are fever free AND without any respiratory symptoms for 3 days.**
2. Any staff that **HAVE been in close contact** with the sick person, but who are **not** presently sick, should **NOT go to work for 14 days** after their last close contact and quarantine themselves. They should watch for [symptoms](#): fatigue, headache, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or a new loss of taste or smell. This list is not all possible symptoms. Close contact includes **being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 15 minutes.**
3. If staff have **not been in close contact** with the sick person, and are **not** sick, they are considered to be at low risk for infection. They can continue to go to work, but should monitor their health for 14 days and stay away from others if they get sick.
4. If staff **have symptoms**, they should get tested immediately. If they test negative and **have not been exposed** to someone with COVID-19, they should stay home away from others and avoid public places until **72 hours** after the fever is gone and symptoms get better.
5. If staff think or know they had COVID-19 with symptoms but did not get a test, they should follow the guidance in #1, stay in isolation for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms, be fever free and without any respiratory symptoms for 3 days.



6. Currently there is no required testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19). The decision to be tested is left to individuals and their physicians.
7. Normal cleaning and sanitizing procedures should be followed, with extra attention to high touch surfaces, such as door knobs, tables and condiment containers. Ensure food surfaces and high touch surfaces are cleaned and sanitized, using food grade sanitizer, such as chlorine based or quats sanitizer, at the manufacturer's recommended concentrations for food facilities. (50-100 ppm chlorine or 200-400 ppm quats) Disinfectant should be used on non-food areas, such as restrooms and floors. Follow the CDC [cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Maintain healthy business operations

1. **Develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan and appoint a COVID-19 supervisor** to trace cases in the workforce and alert anyone who may have been exposed. The supervisor should help employees who have tested positive trace their contacts with coworkers. This will help DCH contact tracing team who will follow-up with anyone identified as a close contact. The supervisor should also prepare resources to assist workers who need guidance about how to [isolate or quarantine](#) at home. The supervisor must maintain the privacy of employees' protected health information.
2. **Establish flexible sick leave policies and practices that are flexible and supportive**, especially for workers 60 or older or those with [underlying health conditions](#) that make them especially vulnerable to the virus. When sick employees can stay home, it prevents the spread to others at work.
3. **Do not require a doctor's note** from any employees with symptoms of COVID-19.
4. **Communicate supportive workplace policies**, such as telework options, employee assistance programs, alternatives to public-facing duties, in the preferred language of employees.
5. **Establish social distancing policies** and practices such as daily COVID-19 screening at the start of each shift.

Please review employee health policies and procedures with staff. Employee health policies should prohibit food workers from working in food establishments while sick.

The following are links to Department of Health's handouts as well as resources for Food Service businesses for Safe Start Reopening.

- [What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19](#)
- [Safe Start COVID-19 Business Plan](#)
- [Reopening Requirements for Dine-In Restaurants/Taverns](#)