

# Guidance for State Agencies to Address Persons Under Investigation and/or a Positive COVID-19 Case in the Workplace

June 5, 2020

## Purpose

This guidance is based on what is currently known about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but the virus continues to spread internationally and in the United States.

The purpose of this guidance is to help prevent or mitigate workplace exposures to COVID-19 when there is a Person Under Investigation (PUI). This guidance provides the following:

- What is a PUI and/or a Positive Case?
- Preparing for potential COVID-19 Exposures
- State Agency Awareness of COVID-19 Disease or Possible Exposures Among Employees
- Immediate Action Steps for Supervisors of PUI
- Human Resources and Privacy Considerations
- Workplace Disinfection
- When can a PUI and/or Positive Case return to work
- Best Practices for Employees Returning to Work

## What is a Person Under Investigation and/or a Positive Case?

A Person Under Investigation (PUI) is someone who is suspected to have COVID-19 disease. The suspicion is based on a combination of their exposure history and symptoms if symptoms are present. A positive case is someone who has been tested for the virus that causes COVID-19 disease and was positive.

## Preparing for potential COVID-19 Exposures.

There are several steps state agencies can take to prevent or mitigate exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Each agency can and should do their part to reduce transmission among employees, maintain healthy agency operations and maintain a healthy work environment. The **Interim Guidance for Employers document** (Appendix 1) outlines steps agencies should take to best prepare for a PUI.

## **State Agency Awareness of COVID-19 Disease or Possible Exposures Among Employees**

The State of Kansas will be implementing certain measures to screen employees who may be exhibiting suspected illness. In addition, employees are advised to address key prevention strategies to prevent exposure to COVID-19 disease. Measures include:

- Assessing temperatures and relative well-being of employees entering the workplace
- Advising employees who get sick at work with 2 or more symptoms of COVID-19 disease and a fever to stay home and contact a health care provider for treatment recommendations and
- Requesting employees not travel to prohibited areas and if travel to prohibited areas does occur, quarantine and self- monitor for 14 days.

Local health departments of the residence of a PUI, are the central authority for determining next steps in addressing issues surrounding a positive case. These local agencies shall receive full cooperation from state agencies regarding necessary investigative needs and appropriate action to contain spread of COVID-19 infections. If a COVID-19 patient is identified as a positive case, the local health department will contact the appropriate state agency for next steps in the investigative process as well as additional measures needed.

### **Immediate Action Steps for Supervisors of a PUI:**

If an employee is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and/or has tested positive for COVID-19 and/or is a close contact of a person who has tested positive or is waiting for COVID-19 test results the direct supervisor should:

1. Notify Human Resources immediately.
2. Write a narrative describing what is believed to be the impacted work area and send to Human Resources via email. The narrative should include:
  - The shift the employee works
  - The last time the employee was in the office
  - Date the symptoms started
  - Identify what other employees the infected employee works closely with especially those working within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or longer or if they recall directly sneezing/coughing on someone
  - Whether any other employees were sent home as a result of the report
  - Location of commons areas employee may have used (restroom, break rooms, mailrooms etc.) in the 2 days prior to their symptom onset.
3. The supervisor shall make themselves available to Human Resources in case there is a need for additional information.

## **Human Resources and Privacy Considerations:**

Preventing stigma and discrimination in the workplace is imperative. State agencies should use only the guidance described above to determine risk for COVID-19 infection. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed coronavirus infection.

Employees identified as PUIs will require additional consideration by state agencies. These include:

- Determining, in conjunction with local health departments close contacts of the affected individual. A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet for 10 minutes or longer OR someone who came into direct contact with secretions (for example, being coughed or sneezed on).
- Close contacts may have to be quarantined for 14 days. During this time, an employee will be eligible for administrative leave.
- Human resource departments should notify the Department of Administration in the event a PUI has been identified and work with agency management to assure the needs of the appropriate local health department are met.

## **Workplace Disinfection:**

Human Resources director will contact Facilities Management when appropriate sanitation of the work and common areas is required. It is recommended that all facilities where State employees work (State-owned or leased) should be subjected to the same disinfection standards). Guidance for workplace disinfection is provided in Appendix 2:

## **When can a PUI and/or Positive Case return to work?**

Release back to work can depend on the status of the individual and shall be determined in conjunction with the relevant local health department for that employee. See the Table 1 below for planning purposes. Note: The term “Afebrile” means not feverish.

Table 1



\*Adapted from TN Dept of Health

# RELEASING CASES AND CONTACTS FROM ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

## CASES

Must be isolated for a minimum of 10 days after onset and can be released after afebrile and feeling well (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 72 hours, whichever is longer.



Note: Lingered cough should not prevent a case from being released from isolation.

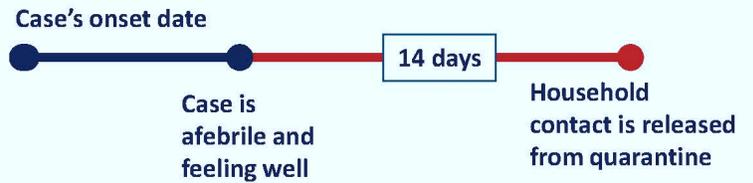
**Examples:**

- A case that is well on day 2, and afebrile and feeling well for 72 hours, can be released from isolation on day 10.
- A case that is well on day 6, and afebrile and feeling well for 72 hours, can be released from isolation on day 10.
- A case that is well on day 14, and afebrile and feeling well for 72 hours, can be released from isolation on day 17.

## HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS

Must be quarantined for 14 days after the case has been afebrile and feeling well (because exposure is considered ongoing within the house).

If a household contact develops symptoms, they should be tested.



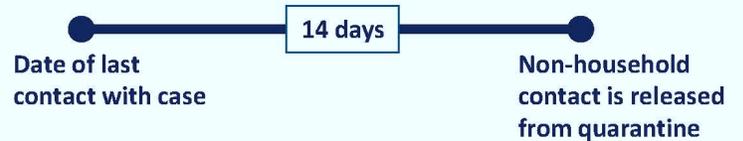
This means that household contacts may need to remain at home longer than the initial case.

**Examples:**

- A case is well 3 days after onset, case released from isolation on day 10, household contact must remain quarantined until day 24.
- A case is well 7 days after onset, case released from isolation on day 10, household contact must remain quarantined until day 24.
- A case is well 14 days after onset, case released from isolation on day 17, household contact must be quarantined until day 31.

## NON-HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS

Must be quarantined for 14 days from the date of last contact with the case.



5/27/20

### **Best Practices for Employees Returning to Work:**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued guidelines for essential workers. The guidance is focused on when those workers can return to work after having been exposed to the new coronavirus.

- Do take your temperature before work.
- Do wear a homemade/non-medical face mask at all times.
- Do practice social distancing as work duties permit.
- Don't stay at work if you become sick
- Don't share headsets or objects used near face.
- Don't congregate in the break room or other crowded places.

Guidance for employers in essential industries.

- When possible, take employees' temperature and assess for symptoms prior to their starting work.
- Do increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.
- Do increase air exchange in the building.
- Do send sick workers home immediately.
- Do test the use of homemade/non-medical face masks to ensure they don't interfere with workflow.



# Appendix 1

## Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

March 6, 2020

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about the coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will update this interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. Additional information and guidance related to COVID-19 is available at [www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus).

KDHE is working with multiple state agencies in the public health response to COVID-19. Much is unknown about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people, such as with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in multiple countries, and some limited person-to-person transmission has been reported in the United States. However, respiratory illnesses like seasonal influenza, are currently widespread in many US communities.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on KDHE's web page at <http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm> and CDC's web page at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/covid19](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/covid19).

### Recommended strategies for employers to use now:

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:**
  - Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

## Appendix 2

### Cleaning and Disinfecting State Facilities

April 16, 2020

#### Purpose:

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known about the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but the virus continues to spread internationally and in the United States. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will update this interim guidance as additional information becomes available.

The following interim guidance may help prevent or mitigate workplace exposures to COVID-19 by executing cleaning and disinfection protocol. This guidance provides information on cleaning and disinfection of State office facilities.

#### How to Clean and Disinfect

##### Clean

- **Wear disposable gloves** to clean and disinfect.
- **Clean surfaces using soap and water.** Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- **High touch surfaces include:** Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

##### Disinfect

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use disinfectant.
- **Recommend use of [EPA-registered household disinfectant](#).**  
**Follow the instructions on the label** to ensure safe and effective use of the product.  
Many products recommend:
  - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)
  - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- **Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used** if appropriate for the surface.
  - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening may not be suitable for disinfection.
  - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.  
**Follow manufacturer's instructions** for application and proper ventilation.  
Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

## Memorandum

**Date: April 22, 2020**

**To: Agency Tenants of State of Kansas Facilities**

**From: Frank Burnam, Director of Facilities and Property Management, Department of Administration**

**Subject: COVID-19 - Workplace Disinfection**

### **Buildings with Office of Facilities & Property Management (OFPM) custodial services (State owned & leased):**

OFPM will be responsible for coordinating and managing responses to clean and restore tenant office and common areas upon notification of a Person Under Investigation (PUI) or confirmed COVID-19 case. In such cases, OFPM will:

- Contract with professional cleaning services which have the specialized training, equipment and products to properly clean the impacted areas in cases involving known positive exposures.
- Meet with the tenant as soon as possible after notification of the PUI or confirmed case in order to clearly define areas of concern prior to the walk through with the professional cleaning team.
- Provide the tenant with estimated costs for any required outside professional services.
- Provide the tenant with a timeline of full or partial closure while service is being completed.

### **Buildings without OFPM custodial services (State owned & leased):**

The agency Facilities manager will be responsible for coordinating and managing responses to clean and restore tenant office and common areas upon notification of a PUI or confirmed COVID-19 case.

Facilities managers should take the following steps:

- Notify the landlord or property management team if in a leased facility.
  - Upon request, OFPM can assist in providing this contact information.
- Contact their custodial services provider to see if they are trained and capable of providing these services in compliance with CDC guidelines and local authorities.
- In the case of known positive exposures, contract with professional cleaning services which have the specialized training, equipment and products to properly clean the impacted areas.
  - Upon request, OFPM can provide additional information related to vendors which perform these specialized services.
- Be prepared to clearly define areas of concern prior to the walk through with contracted custodial services and/or professional cleaning team.
- Request cost proposals for any professional service or additional service not included in current custodial contract service.
- Request a timeline of full or partial closure while service is being completed.