



COVID-19 Testing, Quarantine/Isolation, Contact Tracing & Return to Work Policy

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Testing Policy for County Employees

PURPOSE: To establish and communicate a policy for COVID-19 viral testing, quarantine/isolation of county employees.

SCOPE: This outlines the County's policy for COVID-19 viral testing of county employees.

AUTHORITY: Code of Maryland Regulations, Sec. 10.06.01.06

RESPONSIBILITY:

1. The Health Officer is responsible for overseeing testing operations and directing all requirements for testing, quarantine, and preventive/protective measures for County employees.
2. The Appointing Authorities are responsible for communicating and enforcing testing and quarantine requirements directed by the Health Officer.
3. All employees who are directed to be tested for COVID-19 and/or directed to quarantine or isolate by the Health Officer must comply and adhere to the instructions provided to them.

GENERAL STATEMENT: In accordance with Executive Order 16-2020, Continued Declaration of a Local State of Emergency for Prince George's County, Maryland dated July 7, 2020, and in order to control and medically contain 2019 Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the disease that it causes – Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19, the Health Officer has issued a directive for mandatory COVID-19 testing of county employees. The schedule and frequency of testing shall be determined by the Health Officer

DEFINITIONS:

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – An illness caused by the virus, 2019 Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that is spread from person to person.

COVID-19 Test – A viral test that checks samples from your respiratory system, such as a swab from the inside of your nose, to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

CONTACT TRACING - Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have been infected with an infectious disease; identifying those that may have been exposed to an infectious disease (cases); and identifying the people they came in contact with (contacts), to interrupt disease spread. This involves working with a patient who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease to identify and provide support to people (contacts) who may have been infected through exposure to the patient. This process prevents further transmission of disease by separating people who have (or may have) an infectious disease from people who do not. More specifically, for COVID-19 this generally involves the following:

- Interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone they had close contact with during the time they may have been infectious
- Notifying contacts of their potential exposure
- Referring contacts for testing
- Monitoring contacts for [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Connecting contacts with services they might need during the self-quarantine period

This also includes asking people with COVID-19 to isolate. ***A positive individual's identity is never shared with the people he/she may have potentially exposed.***

ASYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUAL: Someone who is not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, whether they have tested positive for COVID-19 or not.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE/CONTACT: A person is considered to have been exposed or in close contact to a positive or highly probable COVID-19 case if he/she was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. This could be individual exposures added together over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes) or one exposure (within 6 feet of an infected or highly probable case) for a duration of 15 minutes or more (redefined by CDC on October 21, 2020 -<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>).

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS: People w/ COVID-19 may experience the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

QUARANTINE - Used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from the Health Department. In general, a person who is suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19 is required to quarantine for 14 days after his/her last contact with a positive individual.

ISOLATION: Used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation

should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others and follow the directions provided by the Health Department. In the home, anyone sick or infected (without symptoms) should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available). If a person is infected with COVID-19

TESTING POLICY: As testing is available, and as deemed appropriate, county employees may be mandated and/or directed by the Prince George's County Health Officer to test for COVID-19. Based upon individual results, the following will be required:

1. If an employee is tested by his/her physician, or by another entity, and tests positive for COVID-19, he/she will be required to notify his/her Appointing Authority or Designee (to call out from work) and the Health Department's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Control (CVDC) staff at (301) 583-3750 within 48 hours of receiving his/her results, for the purposes of contact tracing. It is important that individuals identify themselves as county employees or staff members when contacting CVDC. The employee must isolate and follow instructions provided by the Health Department.
2. If an employee is tested by the Health Department, and tests positive for COVID-19, he/she will be contacted by the Health Department, with instructions for isolation. The employee should contact his/her Appointing Authority or Designee (to call out from work).
3. If an employee is tested by his/her physician, another entity or the Health Department and is negative for COVID-19, he/she may report to work as directed by his/her agency.

Contact Tracing will be conducted by the county's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Control staff for any employee tests administered by the Health Department and for employees who are residents of Prince George's County that choose to test elsewhere. These efforts will begin within 48 hours of the receipt of a positive lab result. If an employee who is not a resident of Prince George's County chooses to be tested elsewhere, his/her lab results will be sent to his/her local health department; therefore, it is critical that he/she contact the Prince George's County Health Department's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Control (CVDC) Staff at (301) 583-3750 as soon as possible so that his/her close contacts within the workplace and the County can be notified as soon as possible. At no time will the Health Department reveal the identity of a positive individual while conducting contact tracing.

If an employee is determined by the Health Department to have been in close contact to a positive COVID-19 case and is symptomatic, he/she will be required to isolate and follow instructions provided by the Health Department.

If an employee is determined by the Health Department to have been in close contact to a positive COVID-19 case and is asymptomatic (not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms), he/she may be required to quarantine for 14 days after his/her last close contact with the positive individual. Per CDC Guidelines, an asymptomatic contact of a positive or highly probable COVID-19 case may return to work at the sole discretion of the Health Officer if he/she is a critical worker to ensure continuity of essential operations, as long as he/she remains asymptomatic and follows all safety precautions dictated by the Health Department. **Please note that after working their shifts, critical workers must return home and remain on**

home quarantine (when not working), unless instructed otherwise by the Health Department.

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE: Once an employee has completed the required isolation or quarantine period as directed by the Health Department or healthcare provider, he/she must do one of the following:

1. Obtain documentation from his/her healthcare provider that he/she has successfully completed/been released from quarantine or isolation. This documentation must be provided by the employee to the agency's designee before returning to the workplace.
- OR**
2. Contact the Health Department's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Control Program (CVDC) at (301) 583-3750. It is important that individuals identify themselves as county employees/staff members when contacting CVDC. CVDC will make a final assessment to determine whether the employee has successfully completed/can be released from quarantine or isolation, and provide a work release letter to the employee. The employee must provide the agency's designee with his/her release letter before returning to work.

Generally, those who have had COVID-19 or have had COVID-19 symptoms can be around others/return to the workplace:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).

Those who have been severely ill and/or have been admitted to a hospital due to COVID-19 may be required to isolate for a longer period.

Again, each situation may vary based upon different factors, therefore, all employees must contact their physician or CVDC at the end of their isolation/quarantine period in order to be released to return to the workplace.

AGENCY REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP PROTOCOLS: Once an agency is aware of a positive COVID-19 case, it is critical that the Appointing Authority or designee ensures that this case is reported to the Health Department's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Control Program (CVDC) at (301) 583-3750 immediately. Due to extremely high call volume, it is important that the Appointing Authority or designee immediately indicate the purpose for the call (reporting a county employee/staff member COVID case). CVDC will conduct contact tracing to identify any close contacts within the agency/work environment and notify the individuals accordingly. In order to mitigate additional exposure, the Appointing Authority or designee must complete the following protocols:

1. Ensure that all employees/staff members determined to have been exposed to the confirmed COVID-19 case are instructed not to report to the workplace and to quarantine as directed by the Health Department;

2. Close the suite or location within the facility where the individual case worked and contact the Office of Central Services or your facility manager so that it can be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with CDC guidelines;
3. Once cleaning/disinfection has been completed, employees (those not in quarantine) should be instructed to report back to work.
4. **Optional:** A general notification may be sent to agency employees/staff members to inform them that a COVID-19 case has been confirmed; that only those determined to have been exposed will be personally contacted; and to reinforce the responsibility of all employees to follow preventive measures. ***Disclosure of personal identifying information such as name, employee status and/or classification, as well as specific work location or job duties, etc. is strictly prohibited, unless the individual provides authorization to disclose his/her identification.***
See Attachment A – Agency-wide COVID-19 Notification.

COMPLIANCE: Failure to comply w/ this policy may result in disciplinary action.



Date: __11/18/2020__

Ernest L. Carter, MD, PhD, Health Officer

ATTACHMENT A – Agency-wide COVID-19 Notification

DATE: *Insert Date*

TO: All (*Insert Name of Agency*) Employees/Staff Members

FROM: (*Insert Name of Appointing Authority*)

RE: COVID-19 Notification

Please be informed that an individual within the (*insert agency name*) has tested positive for COVID-19. All employees assigned to the same work location were promptly notified of the positive case and the Health Department was contacted in order to begin contact tracing efforts. The Office of Central Services (*or facility manager*) was contacted and a deep cleaning and disinfecting of the (*insert appropriate terms such as suite, facility, restrooms or other office space*) were (*or will be*) performed.

Please note that if you have not been contacted by the Health Department, you have not been identified as a close contact or determined to have been exposed to this case. However, should you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact the Health Department's Communicable and Vector-borne Disease Program at 301-583-3750.

In addition, this serves to reinforce the importance that all employees:

- Self-monitor for symptoms ([signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#));
- Wear a mask or cloth face covering (over nose and mouth);
- Social distance (maintain 6 feet distance from others at all times);
- Practice good hand hygiene (washing hands frequently, including before and after you touch your face or face covering); and
- Disinfect and clean your work spaces.

The (*insert appropriate term such as suite, facility, office*) will be ready for re-occupancy on (*insert date*).