

EMPLOYEE AND SUPERVISOR GUIDANCE:

WHAT STEPS TO TAKE FOR A POSSIBLE OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 ILLNESS IN A NON-CLINICAL, NON-HOUSING UNIVERSITY BUILDING

The following guidance recommends actions for students, faculty, and staff who work in a non-clinical (academic, research, administrative) university building who are close contacts of an infected person, or who suspect or have confirmed that they have COVID-19. These actions are intended to protect the health and safety of other building occupants and are not medical guidance.

What is an exposure?

For COVID-19, a [close contact](#) is defined as any individual who 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 positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated, whether you were wearing a face covering or not.

Close contact also includes instances where there was direct contact with infectious secretions (like being coughed on), direct physical contact with the person (touching, hugging, or kissing), or if you touched a surface or object that may have been contaminated with the virus (shared door handles or tables, eating or drinking utensils, for instance) without proper PPE. Heavy breathing, such as [during exercise](#), or [talking loudly or shouting](#), may increase the distance that virus particles spread and increase the risk of virus transmission.

Close contact generally does not include brief interactions, such as walking past a person.

What to do if there was an exposure or possible exposure?

If you meet this definition of a close contact, you may be contacted by Salt Lake County Health Department or University of Utah Contact Tracers. Do not screen unknown phone callers during this time so you can be more easily reached. If you believe it is likely that you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, such as being in the same household, please follow the instructions below.

- 1) If you have had close contact with someone, or if you are a member of the same household or residence as someone, who is confirmed positive for COVID-19, but you remain asymptomatic, then you must do the following:**

- Quarantine at home, beginning on the date that the person tested positive. Quarantine is a public health term that means that people who are not yet sick, but who have been exposed to COVID-19 are separated from the general population so they don't unintentionally infect somebody else.
- You should monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19, during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. According to the CDC, the most common symptoms are:
 - 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

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

- Stay at home for the 14 days, except to go to doctor's appointments. If possible, stay away others within your home, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19.
 - An option for reducing quarantine to 10 days has been approved by CDC and the Utah Department of Health. For those individuals for whom the 14 day quarantine is an undue burden, the University has approved a modified quarantine of 10 days, as long as the individual enrolls in active monitoring with the University contact tracing team. This includes monitor their temperature and symptoms daily through day 14. A self-report form must be completed to enroll in active monitoring.

- Contact your healthcare provider or call the U Health COVID-19 hotline (801-587-0712) for testing advice. It is generally recommended to wait 5-7 days after the exposure to get tested. The Health Department or UofU contact tracing team may also ask you to get tested for COVID-19 if you were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, even if you don't feel sick. Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you must quarantine since symptoms or the presence of detectable virus may appear up to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

2) If you are symptomatic (coughing, fever, respiratory distress, flu or cold symptoms) and suspect that you have COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19 you must:

- Self-isolate at home, beginning on the date that you tested positive or you become symptomatic (whichever is first). Isolation is a public health term that means that people who have symptoms of COVID-19 and/or tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) are separated from the general population until they are no longer infectious.
- Complete the COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form at <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/covid19-case-reporting/>
 - ***Once the Self-Reporting form has been submitted, Facilities personnel will be dispatched to clean the area. Evacuation of the building is not recommended at this time.***
- Call your primary care physician for guidance on appropriate action to take.
- Obtain a test for COVID-19, if not already tested (either your health care provider or the U Health COVID-19 hotline (801-587-0712) can refer you for testing.
- Notify your immediate supervisor, informing them of your condition and University locations you have frequented for the period up to 3 days prior to becoming symptomatic. Once you have received the results of the diagnostic test contact your supervisor and update the Self-Reporting Form.
- **For Supervisors/Advisors:**
 - While employees or students who suspect they may have COVID-19 should fill out the Self-Reporting form themselves, supervisors or faculty advisors may also report suspected or known cases of COVID-19 for their employees/students using the COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form at <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/covid19-case-reporting/>. The contact tracing team will merge duplicate reports appropriately.

- The Supervisor/Faculty Advisor should:
 - Isolate the potentially impacted areas until positive confirmation of the diagnosis.
 - Contact individuals within the potentially impacted area and inform them of the concern. Consider relocating individuals until the area has been cleaned. The identity of the ill individual should only be shared if they have expressly given permission.
 - Notify the department head and the building manager

Note: For confirmed COVID cases (positive test results), official identification and notification of “close contacts” will be made by contact tracers (either the Salt Lake County Health Department or University of Utah).

3) When can I come back to work?

For people diagnosed with COVID-19 or are contacts of COVID-19 patients, current CDC guidance is that you can discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms

You can return to work after:

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

Some people may require a longer period of isolation. People who are severely ill with COVID-19 might need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared. [Persons who are severely immunocompromised](#) may require testing to determine when they can be around others. For both of these groups, talk to your healthcare provider for more information. If testing is available, it may be recommended by your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will let you know if you can resume being around other people based on the results of your testing.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can return to work after:

- 10 days have passed since test

If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for “If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms.”

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or have received a COVID-19 test, please complete the University of Utah COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form (<https://coronavirus.utah.edu/covid19-case-reporting/>) as soon as possible.

If you have had close contact with someone who is a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19, then you must do the following:

If you are asymptomatic you should:

- Quarantine and practice physical (social) distancing for 14 days following the **last** day you had contact with the case.
- Monitor your health for fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting or diarrhea, during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the person.
 - For those individuals for whom the 14 day quarantine is an undue burden, the University has approved a modified quarantine of 10 days, as long as the individual enrolls in the active monitoring program through University contact tracing. During active monitoring, you will monitor your symptoms and temperature daily through day 14. The self-report form must be completed to initiate this process.

However, if you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and you meet all of the following criteria you do **NOT** need to stay home.

- Has had COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months, **and**
- Has recovered, **and**
- Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath).

If you are tested for COVID-19 and have NO symptoms, you must quarantine until you receive the test results. If the result is positive, follow the instructions above (If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms). If the result is negative, you continue to have no symptoms, AND you do not meet any of the above criteria, you may return to work once your 14 day quarantine is up.

If you are symptomatic you must:

- Self-isolate and practice physical (social) distancing.
- Seek health advice to determine if medical evaluation is needed.
- If sought, medical evaluation and care should be guided by clinical presentation; diagnostic testing for COVID-19 should be guided by CDC's [PUI definition](#).
- Postpone travel on commercial conveyances until no longer symptomatic.

If you are tested for COVID-19 and have symptoms, you must quarantine until you receive the test results. If the result is positive, follow the instructions above (If you think or know you had COVID-19, and had symptoms). If the result is negative, you may return to work after:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved

However, vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to [quarantine](#) if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- Are within 6 months following receipt of the last dose in the series
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure
- They enroll in the active monitoring program through University contact tracing. During active monitoring, you will monitor your symptoms and temperature daily through day 14. The self-report form must be completed to initiate this process.

Persons who do not meet all of the above criteria should continue to follow current [quarantine guidance](#) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Note: HIPAA vaccination status is not protected information under HIPAA and if you asked by your supervisor/employer you must provide this information.

4. Response from facilities and custodians

Since the initial reports of COVID-19, custodians have been doing enhanced sanitation in all buildings. When reports of confirmed cases of COVID-19 come in facilities will post a warning sign preventing entry to the space and wait for at least 24 hours from the last entry of the affected person and then perform a deep sanitation of hard surfaces. This will include door handles, elevator buttons, handrails, etc.

a) Breakrooms

After 24 hours, breakrooms will be sanitized by custodians. However, they will not touch personal items (cups, plates, silverware, etc.), as well as food or drink. Cups, utensils, etc., could be washed with soap and water by staff, as long as they wear gloves while they are doing it, and then removed from the room. Alternatively, they can be discarded. Non-porous food containers could be surface decontaminated, again by staff wearing gloves, and removed. Open or porous containers must be discarded.

b) Office areas

In office areas, as well as desks that students and post docs use, for example adjacent to (but separate from) lab areas, the custodians will only clean the hard surfaces. They will not move papers, clean computers, staplers, pens, etc. Therefore, areas will be cordoned off to prevent access. Enclosed offices, such as those used by faculty, will be closed. Areas that are closed will remain closed for three days from the last date of entry of the affected individual. The CDC has stated that after three days areas are safe to re-enter with routine cleaning and disinfection.

c) Research Laboratories and areas containing equipment, computers, etc.:

These areas will not be sanitized, but shut for three days from the date of last entry of the affected individual, for the following reasons;

- Custodians only routinely clean/sanitize floors, sinks, door handles, etc.
- Custodians do not touch lab benches or shelves housing chemicals because of the risks that these chemicals pose to them.
- The use of chemical disinfectants could result in adverse chemical reactions if containers are not appropriately sealed and stored and if the disinfectant residue is not removed prior to the container being opened again.
- Equipment could be harmed through the inappropriate exposure to disinfectants.
- The sheer area of surfaces in labs (benches, shelves, bottles, equipment, boxes, etc.) would make complete disinfection challenging.

During the lab shutdown, essential operations can continue, as described in the laboratory “Continuity of Operations Plan” developed for Red conditions.

For large, open research laboratories shared by multiple PIs, the affected area is:

- 1) The benches used by the affected individual up to 3 days prior to the onset of symptoms, as well as adjacent benches, if no physical barrier is present.
- 2) Desks or office areas used by the affected individual.
- 3) Other laboratory areas the affected individual conducted experiments, such as tissue culture rooms, imaging rooms, walk in refrigerators.
- 4) Equipment used by the affected individual. If feasible, touch points may be sanitized by staff wearing appropriate PPE (lab coat, gloves and safety glasses) and face coverings.

d) What should staff do upon re-entry?

Once areas are cleared for re-opening/reoccupation, custodians will go in and perform general sanitation prior to re-opening of the area to staff or students. Once custodians have completed their sanitation procedures, staff will sanitize benches and equipment while wearing gloves (nitrile or latex). This will include all touch points not sanitized by custodians, such as freezer doors and handles, external surfaces of biosafety cabinets, keyboards, control panels, etc.

Always review the Operating Manual for recommendations on cleaning and sanitation. A freshly prepared 1:10 dilution of bleach is an excellent multi-purpose disinfectant. In general, 70% ethanol solutions can be used to sanitize delicate surfaces, such as computer keyboards. QUAT-based disinfectants are an alternative for hard surfaces. Confirm that they are listed on

the EPA list N for registered disinfectants or confirm that they have efficacy against hard to kill viruses, such as parvovirus or adenovirus.

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing gloves.

e) Teaching Laboratories;

In the event that a person tests positive for COVID-19 and has been in a teaching laboratory up to 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms or the positive test (whichever is earlier), the lab will be vacated for at least 24 hours after the last entry of the person and then sanitized by facilities staff.

In order to facilitate safe sanitation procedures:

- Supplies for the teaching lab will be minimized to the classes taking place in one day and will be restocked at the end of the day (or beginning of the next), once normal sanitation has occurred. In the event of an affected person being present in the space, any residual materials will be moved to a secure storage location for 3 days of entry from the last date of entry of the person.
- Chemicals will be aliquoted into smaller volumes. The aliquoted materials will be labeled to meet the OSHA chemical labeling requirements (OSHA Hazard Communication Standard). In the event of an affected person being present in the space, any residual chemicals will be moved to a secure storage location for 3 days of entry from the last date of entry of the person.
- Additional supplies and chemicals should be stored in locations that prevent or minimize the risk of exposure to aerosols and droplets, such as in closed off areas within the laboratory (cupboards, drawers, chemical cabinets) or securely in adjacent spaces.
- Students must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times while in the laboratory, at a minimum lab coat, gloves and eye protection. Gloves must be changed at least every hour. Hands must be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time PPE is removed.

- Before using shared equipment, clean gloves must be donned and touch points on the equipment sanitized using wipes provided in the lab. After use, the equipment touch points must be re-sanitized and gloves changed again.