



Frequency Asked Questions for Businesses

1. What should I do if an employee comes to work with COVID-19 symptoms?

Employees who have [symptoms](#) when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home. Employees who develop symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home. The employee should consult with a healthcare provider for further guidance.

2. If employees have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms, should I allow them to work?

No, employees may have been exposed if they are a “[close contact](#)” of someone who is infected, which is defined as being within about 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes at a time:

- Potentially exposed employees who **have** symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and follow [CDC recommended steps](#).
- Potentially exposed employees who **do not have** symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for 14 days.

If a person is a [critical infrastructure employee](#) they may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them and the community.

3. I don't provide paid sick leave to my employees. What should I do?

Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive “emergency sick leave” policies. Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.

The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Employers with fewer than 500 employees are eligible for 100% tax credits for Families First Coronavirus Response Act COVID-19 paid leave provided through December 31, 2020, up to certain limits.

4. What is contact tracing and how does it work?

[Contact tracing](#) is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and people who they came in contact with (contacts) and working with them to interrupt disease spread. This includes asking people with COVID-19 to [isolate](#) and their contacts to [quarantine](#) at home voluntarily. Public health staff begin contact tracing by notifying exposed people (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.



Contact tracing for COVID-19 typically involves

- 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

To prevent the further spread of disease, people who had contact with someone with COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Contacts should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice daily and watching for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If these individuals do begin to show symptoms, they should contact their healthcare provider who may tell them to go and get a test.

5. How does the Health Department determine who a close contact is?

A public health worker who is performing contact tracing will reach out to you to voluntarily talk and create a line list that is made up of who you have been in contact with. A [close contact](#) is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for patients without symptoms, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. This traces who you may have come into contact with and may have been exposed to the virus.

6. One of my employees has tested positive/is a close contact of a positive case; do I need to notify the public or my employees?

Although it is not required to send out a release, businesses can choose to do this to help identify individuals that may have been exposed or to help inform employees of situation within the workplace.

7. Can you give me some guidance on what protocol to take when an employee comes in contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19?

If an employee comes into contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, they would be identified as a close contact through contact tracing, and asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. Businesses are asked to work with Local Health Departments to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals to help facilitate effective contact tracing/ notifications.

8. As a business/organization, can we implement our own policies and procedures surrounding COVID-19 contacts?

Yes, any business or organization can implement their specific COVID-19 policies and procedures. Although not required, you may send these to the Health Department for review.



9. What is the guidance/recommendation for employees traveling out of state and returning to work?

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Quarantine after out-of-state travel is not required at this time, however on the Governor has issued a travel advisory for States that have a COVID-19 positivity rate 15% or higher.
 - Travel advisory information can be found here:
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/covid-19-travel-advisory/covid-19-travel-advisory>
- Monitor yourself for symptoms. If you develop a fever above 100.4, cough, or shortness of breath, isolate yourself from others and call your doctor.
- Keep a distance from others of six feet or more.
- Avoid visiting people who are at high risk of complications from COVID-19, like older people and people who have medical problems for at least the next two weeks.
- Wash your hands frequently/use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough and sneezes.
- Wear a facial covering
- If you have been exposed to someone with known COVID-19, even if you feel well, you need to self-quarantine for 14 days since the exposure, and monitor yourself for symptoms.

10. What is the protocol if a person is a contact of a contact that has not tested positive for COVID-19?

There are no requirements for a person that is a contact of a contact. We urge everyone to use precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as well as monitor themselves daily for any COVID-19 [symptoms](#).

11. If an employee was deemed a close contact by the Defiance County Health Department, and they receive a negative COVID-19 lab result, can they return to work or do they still need to quarantine?

A person that has been deemed a close contact must complete the required 14-day quarantine, even if they receive a negative test result.

12. What are the exemptions for someone not wearing a facemask in a business?

- Facial Coverings (Masks). Businesses must allow all customers, patrons, visitors, contractors, vendors and similar individuals to use facial coverings, except for specifically documented legal, life, health or safety considerations and limited documented security considerations. Businesses must apply exceptions to wearing a mask equally to all persons and post the exceptions at all entrances. Businesses must require all employees to wear facial coverings, except for one of the following reasons: a. Facial coverings in the work setting are prohibited by law or regulation; b. Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards; c. Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons; d. Facial coverings are in violation of the business's documented safety policies; e. Facial coverings are not required when the employee works alone in an assigned work area; or f.



There is a functional (practical) reason for an employee not to wear a facial covering in the workplace

13. What if a customer calls the Defiance County Health Department to report an employee not wearing a mask? What are the next steps?

The primary role of the Health Department is to educate the business on the requirement for mask wearing. Health Department employees will follow up with the business to ensure they are aware of the mask requirements.

- The Health Department is looking for a good faith effort for compliance
- If the Health Department investigation determines a business is blatantly disregarding the mask requirement, the Health Department will work with the Defiance County Prosecutor for enforcement.
- If a business has employees that meet the exceptions for mask wearing, the business must provide the exception in writing to the Health Department.

14. Are there consequences for not following other guidelines, such as social distancing and cleaning sanitizing recommendations?

The primary role of the Health Department is to educate the business on the requirements for social distancing and cleaning/sanitizing. Health Department employees will follow up with the business to ensure they are aware of these requirements.

- The Health Department is looking for a good faith effort for compliance
- If the Health Department investigation determines a business is blatantly disregarding these requirements, the Health Department will work with the Defiance County Prosecutor for enforcement.

15. What is the Ohio Public Health Advisory System?

The Public Health Advisory Alert System provides a clear, color-coded approach to inform Ohioans about their current risk associated with COVID-19 and provides evidence-based recommendations and actions that can be taken to protect themselves and their communities based on the level of risk. The Public Health Advisory Alert System provides context and awareness as to the scope of COVID-19 within our community.

- **Public Health Advisory System**
 - Go to: coronavirus.ohio.gov and click “Ohio Public Health Advisory System” tab.
 - Direct link: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system/>

16. Where can I find a list of Public Health Orders?

- Visit: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov



- Click “Responsible Restart Ohio,” and select “Public Health Orders.”
- View “Governor DeWine”, “Ohio Department of Health”, and “Joint Director’s Orders” tabs for all Public Health Orders.
- Direct Link: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/public-health-orders/public-health-orders>

17. At what point do we have to exclude employees from work? What if they only have mild symptoms such as a cough, but no fever?

Businesses shall follow the recommended symptom assessment for excluding employees from work.

- All employees who are able to work from home should work from home.
- For those employees who must report: take your temperature with a thermometer each day. If you have a fever at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, stay home. Also monitor for coughing, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing and stay home if they occur. Other symptoms of COVID-19 include chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell.

18. The Orders say employees have to wear a face covering or barriers when within 6 feet of others. What are acceptable barriers?

Barriers shall be smooth, easily cleanable, and nonabsorbent. To meet this requirement, they can be constructed of Plexiglas, plastic, or similar materials. The purpose of a barrier is to prevent respiratory droplets from spreading from one person to another and should extend above a person’s head while sitting or standing.