

Allen County Business Guidance

Quarantine, Isolation and Contact Tracing

This document will explain Quarantine and Isolation, and how Allen County Public Health will work with you in the event that an employee becomes sick or is exposed to COVID-19.

If your business has not already done so, please review and consider updating your policies to ensure that people who are sick have enough time off to recover. Consider developing policies and practices that limit the in-person contact employees have with each other and customers, following the Responsible RestartOhio guidelines and *Allen County Public Health's Business Guidance*.

What's the difference between Quarantine and Isolation?

Quarantine is used to **keep someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others**. Someone in self-quarantine limits their movement outside of their home or current residence for 14 days from the date which they last worked with or were exposed to the person who is ill. The person being quarantined will check their temperature twice a day, watch for symptoms of COVID-19 and if possible, stay away from people who are at higher risk for getting sick from COVID-19.

Allen County Public Health, or the health department where the employee lives, will be in regular communication with the person being quarantined, and if no symptoms develop during the 14 days, Allen County Public Health will send a release from quarantine letter.

If an employee starts to show symptoms during self-quarantine, they should contact Allen County Public Health to discuss testing options. If the employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, they should follow the **Isolation** guidance below.

Isolation is used to **separate sick people from healthy people**. People who are in isolation will stay at home or their current residence and separate themselves from others (including pets) by staying in a specific "sick" bedroom or space and using a different bathroom if possible.

People must stay in isolation until after

- 24 hours with no fever *without* using fever reducing medicine **AND**
- there has been improvement in symptoms **AND**
- 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If an employee tested positive but does not have symptoms

- They should stay home in isolation until after 10 days have passed since their positive test.

Allen County Public Health (or other health department) will be in regular communication with the person being isolated and will send a release from isolation letter when they meet the isolation criteria above.

Resource: Quarantine vs. Isolation Handout - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/if-you-are-sick/317422-A_Quarantine-and-Isolation_508.pdf.

How will our business/organization work with Allen County Public Health if an employee is positive for COVID-19?

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, Allen County Public Health will call your business to identify close contacts of the person positive for COVID-19.

NOTE: A close contact (as defined by the [CDC](#)) is someone who was within approximately 6 feet of someone positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more; or having direct contact with someone positive for COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on), even if it was less than 15 minutes.

This is usually what happens.

Someone positive with COVID-19 is reported to Allen County Public Health. (By law, all positive cases are reported by laboratories and/or healthcare providers to the health district of their residence.)



A public health nurse, contact tracer, or epidemiologist from **Allen County Public Health will contact the positive individual** or their emergency contact to determine where the individual was while they were sick. The employee will be asked to identify close contacts, including those at work.



If your employee does not give permission to discuss COVID-19 results with their employer, that information will not be shared. **You will simply be notified that your employee is off until further notice.** A public health professional will send a work restriction letter to your business stating that the employee is restricted from work until released by Allen County Public Health.



Allen County Public Health will ask for a list of employees who had close contact with that employee. While the positive individual will list initial contacts, **your business will play an important role in helping to contact coworkers who had close contact with that employee.**



Close contacts will self-quarantine at home for 14 days from the last date of contact with the person positive for COVID-19. NOTE: a negative test during the 14-day period does not eliminate the need for the full 14-day quarantine.

If the employee has a [critical infrastructure position](#) such as a healthcare worker and is a close contact, CDC [guidelines](#) for those positions will be used instead.



If the coworker in quarantine becomes sick, they should notify Allen County Public Health and get tested. If positive for COVID-19, they will follow either the symptom-based strategy (described above) or test-based strategy before they return to work.

One of our employees just reported to us that they tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

Instruct the employee to stay home and self-isolate. Employers who are notified by their employees that they are confirmed positive for COVID-19 may contact the Health Department to initiate follow-up and discuss protocols. Allen County Public Health will follow Allen County residents, or can help connect you to other county health departments if the employee lives in another jurisdiction.

IMPORTANT: You must protect the confidentiality of your employee. Legally, you cannot identify the employee by name. Do not disclose to other staff or contacts the name or other health or personal information of the employee who tested positive for COVID-19.

One of our employees has symptoms of COVID-19. Should I send everyone home?

Make arrangements for the employee to get tested as soon as possible. Check the Allen County Public Health coronavirus [webpage](#) for testing locations and information. In the meantime, identify co-workers and individuals that the employee may have come into close contact with the employee (see definition above). If your employee with symptoms is positive for COVID-19, the close contacts will quarantine at home.

One of my employees has self-reported that they came into contact with someone believed to be positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

It's important that the person the employee came into contact with be tested to verify they are positive for COVID-19. If confirmed, and the employee was identified as a close contact (see definition above), ACPH would be notified, and would follow the steps described above. If the employee has questions, you (the employer) should encourage the employee to call the health department for further assistance.

One of our employees just found out that they are positive with COVID-19 and was in contact with a member of the public (or vendor, or contractor). What happens next?

Through contact tracing, the employee would identify close contacts. If your business serves guests or customers who are in close contact (see definition above) with employees, such as hair salons, Allen County Public Health recommends collecting contact information as appropriate that can be shared for contact tracing purposes.

If an employee is sharing a home with a person positive with COVID-19 who is in isolation, when does the 14-day quarantine period begin?

The 14-day quarantine period starts from the date of the last close contact with the person positive with COVID-19. The quarantine period could be extended beyond 14 days if the person positive for COVID-19 still has symptoms and continues to have close contact with the employee (for example, the employee is a caregiver for that person).

When can my employee come back to work if they have been sick or had an exposure?

Allen County Public Health will provide the employee a return-to-work letter to share with their employer.

NOTE: If employees are able to work remotely from home, an employee could work through their quarantine period and possibly during their isolation period depending on their health status.