

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS

COVID-19 WORKPLACE CONTACT TRACING

(NON-HEALTHCARE SETTINGS)

ISOLATION OF COVID-19 CASES

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others. All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (i.e., COVID-19 cases) should isolate for a minimum of five days followed by five days of wearing a well-fitting mask while around others as recommended by the [North Dakota Department of Health](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

ALL CASES should be EXCLUDED from the workplace during isolation.

The recommended isolation periods for:

Symptomatic cases: at least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and** they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. This isolation period should be followed by five days of wearing a well-fitting mask while around others.

Asymptomatic cases: 5 days after specimen collection date, as long as they remain asymptomatic for the duration of their isolation period. This isolation period should be followed by five days of wearing a well-fitting mask while around others.

QUARANTINE OF CLOSE CONTACTS

Quarantine keeps close contacts who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.

A **close contact** is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infectious person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. The infectious period begins **2 DAYS BEFORE** illness onset (or, for asymptomatic cases, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) and continues until the case is released from isolation. Close contacts should quarantine for 5 days after their date of last exposure to a case followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days.

1. If the close contact has received their booster shot, has had a prior infection in the last 90 days, are within 6 months of their primary mRNA series or two months of J & J does, or if both the infected person and the close contact were consistently and correctly wearing appropriate masks at all times, then they do not need to quarantine following an exposure, but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day five after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19
2. If the close contact has not been vaccinated or is more than 6 months out from their second mRNA dose, or more than 2 months after the J & J dose, and not yet boosted, the CDC recommends quarantine for five days followed by strict mask use for an additional five days. If a 5 day quarantine is not feasible, it is imperative than an exposed person wear a well-fitting mask at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure.

HOW TO IDENTIFY WORKPLACE CLOSE CONTACTS

Determine when the employee with COVID-19 worked while infectious based on the **symptom onset date for symptomatic cases** or **date of test/specimen collection date for asymptomatic cases** (this date is listed on each case's NDDoH Isolation Notification Letter). The **infectious period begins TWO DAYS PRIOR** to a symptomatic case's onset date or to an asymptomatic case's test date. A case is infectious until released from isolation.

Anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period in the workplace would be considered a **workplace close contact**.

COVID-19 CALCULATOR

Use the [COVID-19 Calculator](#) to calculate a close contact's quarantine period.

HOW TO NOTIFY WORKPLACE CLOSE CONTACTS

Inform the close contact that he/she may have been exposed to COVID-19. *If the case gave permission to use his/her name when notifying close contacts, you may disclose this information.*

Specify the **date of last exposure** and tell the close contact to **quarantine at home** for 5 days after the date of last exposure and then mask the additional 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional five days, unless previously cited quarantine exemptions apply. For further guidance on the **quarantine options**, provide the [NDDoH Close Contact factsheet](#) and [NDDoH Quarantine Recommendations for Close Contacts Visual Timeline](#).

1. If a five day quarantine is not feasible, it is imperative that an exposed person [wear a well-fitting mask](#) at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure.
2. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day five after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

[NDDoH Coronavirus](#)

[NDDoH Quarantine & Isolation Calculator](#)

The NDDoH Workplace Subject Matter Expert team is available to provide guidance at dohcovidbusiness@nd.gov or by calling 701-328-2378.