

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers for Wisconsin State Employees Regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

This document contains answers to frequently asked questions for state employees and was prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Responses below are in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements or state administrative code. If you have additional questions, please ask your supervisor.

The Departments of Corrections, Health Services, and Veterans Affairs may issue additional requirements for their employees, residents, and visitors of congregate living facilities. Additionally, any agency may issue additional requirements, if necessary, to comply with federal regulations. All agency rules or guidance require approval by the Division of Personnel Management Administrator prior to implementation

Section B: Reporting to Work			
Updated 02/25/2022	1.	I am worried about being exposed to the coronavirus at work. Should I still report to work, and will I be protected?	If directed to report to work, you should continue to report to work. As state employees, we have obligations to maintain services. Agencies continue to implement mitigation measures informed by CDC and DHS recommendations to reduce exposure in our workplaces.
	2.	Will I be notified someone at work has COVID-19?	If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, the agency Human Resources Director will notify employees who were in close contact with the employee to inform them of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Due to the current spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin, a notice to the entire worksite is not necessary. Additional information on the DHS COVID-19 resources for employers should be referred to for additional information about how to assess risk and steps to maintain operations when an employee is positive.
Updated 05/28/2021	3.	Am I subject to disciplinary action if I refuse to come to work?	Employees who fail to come to work will be treated just as if they failed to come to work at any other time and may be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who have concerns are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their supervisor or human resources.
Updated 05/28/2021	4.	If my job requires me to work with the public, should I continue to come to work?	Yes, unless directed not to come to work. The State continues to follow CDC and DHS recommendations to provide the appropriate protective measures to employees assigned to work in a situation that would put them at greater risk of exposure than the typical interactions encountered in conducting usual life activities. These measures include increased hygiene measures, personal protective equipment, social distancing measures, or physical barriers.
	5.	If I am exposed to the COVID-19 virus on the job and become ill, am I eligible for Workers Compensation benefits?	The COVID-19 virus, like Influenza, would most likely not be compensable under Wisconsin Workers Compensation, as it would be very difficult to determine where and when an employee was exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

	Employee Scenarios	Guidance
	<p>The following scenarios provide guidance to employees who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, are awaiting a test result or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, etc.</p> <p>For the purposes of the scenarios below, close contact, or exposed to, includes any of the following situations while you spent time with a person with COVID-19, even if they did not have symptoms and even if you or the person were wearing a mask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had direct physical contact with the person (for example, a hug, kiss, or handshake) • Were within 6 feet of the person for a prolonged period (15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) starting from 2 days before illness onset. The 15 minutes does not need to be continuous (e.g., 3, 5-minute periods would count). • Had contact with the person’s respiratory secretions (for example, coughed or sneezed on; contact with a dirty tissue; shared a drinking glass, food, towels, or other personal items). • Live with the person or stayed overnight for at least one night in a house with the person. 	
<p>Updated 1/6/2022</p>	<p>A. Employee has no symptoms (asymptomatic) and has tested positive for COVID-19 via an antigen or PCR test</p>	<p>For employees who tested positive via an antigen test, it is recommended that they have a PCR test within 48 hours to confirm the positive result. If the employee tested positive but has no symptoms - they should isolate for 5 days, followed by five days of wearing a mask when around others.</p> <p>If during the 5 days of isolation the employee becomes symptomatic, follow Scenario F.</p>
<p>Updated 1/20/2022</p>	<p>B. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, but has not yet been tested</p>	<p>Recommend employee be tested. If the employee is unable to get a test, they should stay home until all the following apply: 1) They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications). 2) Their other symptoms have improved. 3) They have isolated for 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms).</p> <p>Once the isolation is complete, they no longer need to stay home but should wear a mask around others for 5 additional days (day 6-10). If unable to wear a mask you should quarantine for 10 full days and avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease.</p> <p>If the employee is tested, stay home until test results return. Follow Scenario D, E, or F, depending on test type and results. Information on COVID-19 Test Types</p>
	<p>C. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested but not yet received the test results</p>	<p>Stay home until test results return. Follow Scenario D, E, or F, depending on test type and results. Information on COVID-19 Test Types</p>
	<p>D. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested and PCR test results came back <i>negative</i></p>	<p>Employee does not have COVID-19. Follow standard employee illness protocols for returning to work. Example: 24 hours fever-free, or 2 days after last episode of vomiting or diarrhea, or when on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, or as approved to work by a doctor.</p>

Updated 1/6/2022		E. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested with an antigen test and test results come back <i>negative</i>	Employee is a suspect case. A follow up PCR test is recommended within 48 hours. Continue isolating while awaiting the PCR test. If the PCR test is negative, follow instructions for Scenario D and if the PCR test is positive, follow the instructions for Scenario F. Information on COVID-19 Test Types
Updated 1/20/2022		F. Employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, has been tested and test results came back <i>positive</i>	Employee shall stay home until all the following apply: 1) They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications). 2) Their other symptoms have improved. 3) They have isolated for 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms). Once the isolation is complete, they no longer need to stay home but should wear a mask around others for 5 additional days (day 6-10). If unable to wear a mask you should quarantine for 10 full days and avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease. Note: For some people who develop serious illness from COVID-19, a longer period of isolation may be required before it is safe to be around others or go back to work. Your health care provider will make this determination in consultation with your local public health department.
Updated 10/18/2021		G. Employee had a positive PCR test for COVID-19 in the past and now has another positive test but has no symptoms	Employees who have again tested positive within 90 days of their original positive and remain asymptomatic may continue to work and do not need to isolate. This is because the virus can continue to result in positive test outcomes when the person has fully recovered and is no longer contagious. Individuals who test positive beyond 90 days of their original positive test will be treated as a new infection and should follow Scenario A or F depending on the presences of symptoms. Information on COVID-19 Test Types
Updated 10/18/2021		H. Employee had a positive PCR test for COVID-19 in the past and now is sick and has another positive test	Employees who develop symptoms and have again tested positive within 90 days of their original positive should stay home and be evaluated by their health care provider. If no other cause of symptoms can be determined, the employee should follow Scenario F. Individuals who test positive beyond 90 days of their original positive test will be treated as a new infection and should follow Scenario A or F depending on the presences of symptoms. Information on COVID-19 Test Types
Updated 1/6/2022		I. Employee has been in <i>close contact</i> with someone who shows symptoms but has not been tested	Employee can continue to work, but they should self-monitor for symptoms daily.
Updated 1/6/2022		J. Employee has been in <i>close contact</i> with someone who shows symptoms and is waiting on test results	If the close contact tests negative, the employee can continue to work, but they should self-monitor for symptoms daily. If close contact tests positive the employee should follow Scenario K-1 or K-2.
Updated 1/20/2022		K-1. Employee (unvaccinated or completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 5 months ago and has not received a booster dose or completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and has not received a booster	Employees who are up to date with current vaccine recommendations should refer to Scenario K-2 below.

		dose) has been in close contact with or exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 (symptomatic or asymptomatic)	<p>Quarantine: stay home and completely away from others for five days. After the five days of quarantine wear a face mask for an additional five days when around others. Regardless of vaccination status, employees should get tested on day five after exposure.</p> <p>If symptoms appear, stay home until all of the following apply: 1) They have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications). 2) Their other symptoms have improved. 3) They have isolated for 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms).</p> <p>Once the isolation is complete, they no longer need to stay home but should wear a mask around others for 5 additional days (day 6-10). If unable to wear a mask you should quarantine for 10 full days and avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease.</p> <p>*To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that quarantine requirements may be modified in circumstances when excluding a person from work could result in an imminent threat to patient care, public health or public safety per DHS COVID-19 Health Alert #16: Quarantine of Wisconsin Residents Exposed to COVID-19 Is an Essential Prevention Strategy.</p> <p>If an employee receives notice from a public health official or contact tracer that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they should be in contact with their management to verify requirements based on their position.</p>
Updated 1/20/2022		K-2. Up-to-date vaccinated employee has been in close contact with or exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 (symptomatic or asymptomatic)	<p>Employees who are up-to-date with current vaccine recommendations (i.e., have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people) do not need to quarantine after exposure to COVID-19 but should wear a well-fitting mask when around other people for 10 days. Vaccinated persons should be tested on day 5 after their exposure. If unable to wear a mask you should quarantine for 10 full days and avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease.</p> <p>Persons who are unvaccinated or not up to date with current vaccine recommendations should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with COVID-19 as provided in Scenario K-1 above.</p>
Updated 1/20/2022		L. Employee is living with someone who tested positive for COVID-19	<p>Unvaccinated employee, or employee completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 5 months ago and has not received a booster dose, or completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and has not received a booster dose:</p> <p>If you live with someone who has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 and you are unable to separate from them in the home, extend your quarantine. The following must be met before you start your final 5 days of quarantine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 days have passed since anyone in the house has tested positive for COVID-19 or began having COVID-19 symptoms.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who had symptoms or tested positive was able to wear a mask around others in the house, or at least 10 days have passed since the day of their positive test (if asymptomatic) or their symptoms began. • Anyone who developed symptoms is improving and has been fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours. <p>COVID-19: Close Contacts Wisconsin Department of Health Services</p> <p>Employees who are up to date with current vaccine recommendations should refer to Scenario K-2 above.</p> <p>*To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, DHS advises that quarantine requirements may be modified in circumstances when excluding a person from work could result in an imminent threat to patient care, public health, or public safety per DHS COVID-19 Health Alert #16: Quarantine of Wisconsin Residents Exposed to COVID-19 Is an Essential Prevention Strategy.</p> <p>If an employee receives notice from a public health official or contact tracer that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they should be in contact with their management to verify requirements based on their position.</p>
Updated 1/6/2022		M. Employee is a <i>close contact</i> to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 at work	<p>Unvaccinated employees and those who are not up to date with current vaccine recommendations should refer to Scenario K-1 above.</p> <p>Employees who are up to date with current vaccine recommendations should refer to Scenario K-2 above.</p> <p>*To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, DHS advises that quarantine requirements may be modified in circumstances when excluding a person from work could result in an imminent threat to patient care, public health, or public safety per DHS COVID-19 Health Alert #16: Quarantine of Wisconsin Residents Exposed to COVID-19 Is an Essential Prevention Strategy.</p> <p>If an employee receives notice from a public health official or contact tracer that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they should be in contact with their management to verify requirements based on their position.</p>
		N. Employee is a <i>close contact</i> to someone who has been exposed to another positive person.	Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily.
		O. Employee lives with or cares for someone who is has been exposed to another positive person	Employee can continue to work and self-monitors symptoms daily

	6.	What if I believe a co-worker has the COVID-19 virus or has been exposed to it?	Employee concerns should be discussed with your supervisor or someone in Human Resources. Employees will be expected to report to work as directed.
Updated 02/25/2022	7.	What is the current status of employee travel for state business?	No restrictions.
Updated 02/25/2022	8.	What is the current direction related to physical distancing or meetings?	No restrictions.