

COVID-19 FAQs FOR BUSINESSES

These are questions we frequently receive from businesses and organizations through our COVID-19 call center and the contract tracing process. Much of this information will assist you in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace, and help you understand what steps to take if you have an employee who tests positive for COVID-19 or is exposed to someone who has.

Why do we have to quarantine if we were all wearing masks? While face masks and coverings are a proven way to slow the spread of COVID-19, they are not a substitute for physical distancing. Therefore, anyone who has had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 must still quarantine.

I had all my exposed employees get tested, and they are negative. Can they return to work? Exposed individuals need to quarantine for the full 14 days, even if they have a negative COVID-19 test result. This is because the incubation period is the full 14 days. Testing negative immediately after exposure means that the virus is not yet present in the nose and throat where it replicates and causes symptoms. Since this may not occur until day 14, exposed individuals still need to quarantine.

How am I supposed to run my business? We know that these measures are difficult, but as a community we must do what we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19. There are many preventative actions you can take in order to avoid significant disruptions to your operations. These recommendations are location in the "Preventing Spread in the Workplace" section of the toolkit.

How can I avoid mass quarantines which may result in me having to shut down my business? Practicing appropriate physical distancing lowers the chance of disruptions to your operations following a COVID-19 exposure. Once those who had close contact with the COVID-19 positive individuals have been identified and sent home, properly sanitize their work spaces. Employees that did not have close contact should still monitor for symptoms, and if you do not have screening procedures in place, consider implementing them.

When can employees come back to work? Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 10 days from when their symptoms started, or if asymptomatic, 10 days from their test date. They may not be released from isolation until there are cleared by the Health Department. Those who are in quarantine because of an exposure will need to stay home for a minimum of 14 days from their last date of contact to the infectious individual.



SPRINGFIELD -
GREENE COUNTY
HEALTH

#STAYSTRONGSGF
[HEALTH.SPRINGFIELDMO.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](https://health.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirus)

Our employee who was sick came into close contact with customers/clients, what do we do? Close contacts do not include infectious people who may walk past you at a place like the grocery store or gas station. In settings like this, there is no action necessary. If a customer or client has had close contact to an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19, you may wish to notify them. We recommend that you only relay the CDC recommendations to avoid unintentional misinformation. We have attached an example phone call script and an email template to assist in making these contacts. We recommend that you notify those that you can verify had close contact. You may also choose to provide them with the supplemental materials in this packet that they can review while they wait for a call from us. If you don't have names or contact information for those individuals, have the employee disclose this information to the Health Department.

Is it okay to tell my staff or customers who tested positive? Due to privacy laws, you are prohibited from sharing the private medical information of your employees without their prior authorization. Even if you are asked by an employee or customer directly about an individual, you should neither confirm nor deny whether that individual is positive for COVID-19.

Can I require proof that the employee is positive or has been exposed? The Health Department will provide all positive individuals and their close contacts with documentation outlining isolation or quarantine guidelines. However, it may take several days for this information to be made available to your employee. If the employee has completed their isolation or quarantine and has not yet heard from the Health Department, they may call 874-1211. Please note: the individual, not their employer, must request this documentation.

Should I require my positive employee to show proof of a negative test before returning to work? No. The Health Department utilizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) strategy for releasing an individual who tested positive for COVID-19. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 10 days from when their symptoms started, or if asymptomatic, 10 days from their test date. They may not be released from isolation until there are cleared by the Health Department. After 10 days and 24 hours symptom free, the virus is no longer replicating and the individual is not infectious. However, because tests are not able to differentiate between live and dead virus cells, people may receive a positive test result for up to 6 weeks after the onset of symptoms even though they are no longer ill or infectious.



SPRINGFIELD -
GREENE COUNTY
HEALTH

#STAYSTRONGSGF
[HEALTH.SPRINGFIELDMO.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](https://health.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirus)

I was told I was an essential worker/business during the Stay at Home order. Does this mean that I can continue working even if I was exposed to COVID-19? In the spring, the Stay at Home ordinances in Springfield and Greene County identified several types of businesses that were essential and could remain open. However, these businesses do not necessarily fall under the definition of critical infrastructure which might allow employees who have been exposed to COVID-19 to continue working under a modified quarantine. Typically, modified quarantine ONLY applies to first responders and health care workers. If you are exposed to COVID-19, the Health Department will determine if you are eligible for a modified quarantine. If you would like a determination, notify the contact tracer who reaches out to you. PLEASE NOTE: THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19. THERE IS NO MODIFIED ISOLATION. ALL WORKERS WHO TEST POSITIVE MUST ISOLATE.

If I have to isolate or quarantine and working from home is not an option for me, how will I pay my bills? Full time and part time workers may be eligible for paid sick leave through the Family First Coronavirus Response Act. The paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave provisions of the FFCRA apply to certain public employers, and private employers with fewer than 500 employees. If their employer has more than 500 employees and is not offering paid sick leave to full time and/or part time employees, then the employee can apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). To be eligible for a PUA claim, individuals must first file a regular unemployment claim and be found not eligible. However, eligibility for part-time employees for both PUA and regular unemployment varies. They can begin that process here: <https://uinteract.labor.mo.gov/benefits/home.do>, and find more information on PUA here: <https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus>. More information on the FFCRA can be found in the Toolkit section below under "Families First Coronavirus Response Act Posters." Both FFCRA and PUA are set to expire on 12/31/2020.



SPRINGFIELD -
GREENE COUNTY
HEALTH

#STAYSTRONGSGF
HEALTH.SPRINGFIELDMO.GOV/CORONAVIRUS