



Guidance to Supervisors

This guidance is being offered to help supervisors manage questions regarding staff with COVID-19 health questions. This guidance replaces the guidance dated April 10, 2020.

Answers are based on the current guidance from the CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS) will provide guidance to departments and supervisors in managing these situations including recommendations on cleaning areas where potentially ill employees may have worked. Contact EHRS by calling (215)898-4453 or emailing ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu. This guidance will be updated as necessary.

1. An employee reports they have **tested positive** for COVID-19.

Guidance to Supervisor: **Employee should not report to work.** Staff should remain out of the workplace based on the guidance received from their healthcare provider. Generally, employees may return to work when they meet BOTH of the following criteria: at least 3 days after resolution of fever (off fever reducing medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen) and improvement in respiratory symptoms; and at least 10 days have passed since the symptoms started.

If the employee has recently worked on campus, the supervisor should ask them to identify close contacts with whom they have interacted in the period of 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms up until the time the individual started self-isolating. Close contacts are defined as those individuals who have been within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more. The supervisor should tell the employee that they will be notifying EHRS so that a contact investigation can be conducted.

The supervisor should then contact EHRS to initiate the contact investigation. EHRS can be reached by calling (215)898-4453 or emailing ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu. After the investigation is complete, the supervisor, in conjunction with EHRS will determine who will notify those close contacts at Penn, and EHRS will provide guidance on next steps including cleaning protocols.

Close contacts should stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days even if they do not develop symptoms. In the event of a severe shortage of workers, those close contacts that are designated as essential staff and are asymptomatic may continue to work so long as their health remains stable, they utilize masks and practice appropriate social distancing activities. They should also monitor their health for any symptoms. Supervisors should work closely with EHRS to determine how to proceed and what information is to be conveyed.

Peers and colleagues may express worry and concern upon learning of this news – either from their infected colleagues themselves, or through the rumor mill. Supervisors can address this issue and let others know that an unnamed member of the workforce has been diagnosed with COVID-19. They should be told that there is no action they need to take unless they are notified otherwise.

Because employee well-being, privacy, and workplace safety remain priorities at all times, no additional information should be provided. The language below is offered as an example:

“I received a report that a colleague in our unit was diagnosed with COVID-19. Environmental Health & Radiation Safety will engage in a contact investigation. If you don’t receive a notification, there is no further action that needs to be taken on your part. Please continue to monitor yourself closely for symptoms and practice disease prevention behaviors such as wearing a face covering, hand washing and social distancing. Should you not feel well, please stay home and contact your primary care provider.”

2. An employee reports they are being **tested** for COVID-19.

Guidance to Supervisor: **Employees should not report to work.**

If the employee has recently worked on campus, the supervisor should ask them to identify close contacts with whom they have interacted in the period of 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms up until the time the individual started self-isolating. Close contacts are defined as those individuals who have been within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more. The supervisor should tell the employee that they will be notifying EHRS so that a contact investigation can be conducted.

The supervisor should then contact EHRS to initiate the contact investigation. EHRS can be reached by calling (215)898-4453 or emailing ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu. After the investigation is complete, the supervisor, in conjunction with EHRS will determine who will notify those close contacts at Penn, and EHRS will provide guidance on next steps including cleaning protocols.

Employees should be permitted to return to work based on the results of the test and their overall state of health. EHRS will work with the supervisor to determine the appropriate return to work criteria.

Peers and colleagues may express worry and concern upon learning of this news – either from their infected colleagues themselves, or through the rumor mill. Supervisors can address this issue and let others know that an unnamed member of the workforce has been diagnosed with COVID-19. They should be told there is no action they need to take unless notified otherwise.

Because employee well-being, privacy, and workplace safety remain priorities at all times, no additional information should be provided. The language below is offered as an example:

“I received a report that a colleague in our unit is being tested for COVID-19. Environmental Health & Radiation Safety will engage in a contact investigation. If you don’t receive a notification, there is no further action that needs to be taken on your part. Please continue to monitor yourself closely for symptoms and practice disease prevention behaviors such as wearing a face covering, hand washing and social distancing. Should you not feel well, please stay home and contact your primary care provider.”

3. An employee has reported that they are a close contact of someone who has

tested positive for COVID-19 and **has been notified** by that individual.

Guidance to Supervisor: Close contacts should remain at home and self-isolate for 14 days after exposure even if they do not develop symptoms. In the event of a severe worker shortage, essential staff may continue to report to work if they are asymptomatic. **Supervisors should contact EHRS in order to determine how best to proceed.** Employees should continue to monitor their health and practice disease prevention behaviors such as wearing a mask, handwashing and social distancing. If the employee begins to feel unwell, they should not report to work, self-isolate and consult their healthcare provider.

The supervisor should consult with EHRS for additional guidance. EHRS can be reached by calling (215)898-4453 or emailing ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu. Appropriate cleaning protocols should be followed. No additional notification should be given to other staff members within the department.

4. An employee is **worried about having been exposed** to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or tested for COVID-19, but has not received official notification from the confirmed case or their local public health authorities.

Guidance to supervisor: **Employees should continue to report to work.** Employees should continue to monitor their health and practice disease prevention behaviors such as wearing a mask, handwashing and social distancing. If the employee begins to feel unwell, they should not report to work, self-isolate and consult their healthcare provider.

While testing for COVID-19 is available, there are clinical criteria that need to be met in order to have the testing. Testing must be ordered by a healthcare provider and is not currently freely accessible. EHRS will continue to work closely with other University offices in addition to local public health authorities to determine the appropriate notification processes for close contacts of those individuals that receive a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

May 28, 2020