MANAGING COVID-19 CASES IN THE WORKPLACE

Responding to COVID-19

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in your workplace. This should include activities to:

- Prevent and reduce transmission among employees
- Maintain healthy business operations,and,
- Maintain a healthy work environment.

Employers should respond in a way that considers the level of disease transmission in their communities and revise their business response plans as needed.

The following steps for responding when an employee tests positive for the coronavirus are based on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employees.

- Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.

- Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, vendors, and visitors, and sent home.

- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.
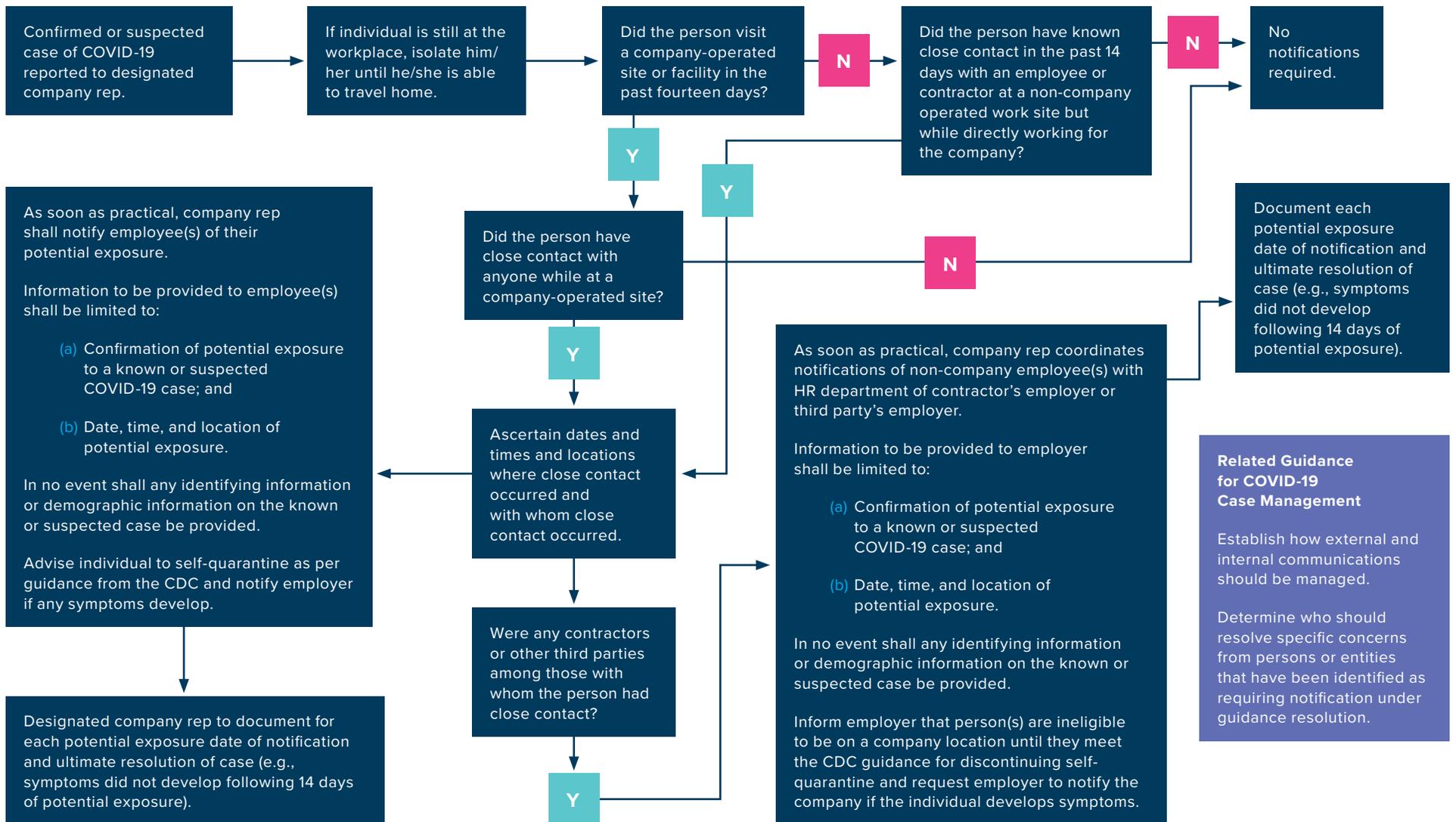
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- Send home all employees who worked closely with the infected employee for 14 days under CDC Guidance to ensure the infection does not spread. While quarantined, those employees should self-monitor for symptoms, avoid contact with high-risk individuals, and seek medical attention if symptoms develop.

- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Fellow employees should self-monitor for symptoms.

- Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met. The CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented.

- OSHA recordkeeping requirements mandate covered employers record certain work-related injuries and illnesses on their OSHA 300 log. OSHA released new guidance May 19 that employers are responsible for recording a COVID-19 case if it is confirmed as a COVID-19 illness; is work-related; and involves one or more of the general recording criteria, such as medical treatment beyond first aid or days away from work.

3 NOTIFY EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS AND VENDORS

- **Notify all employees who work in the location or area where the employee works of the situation without revealing any confidential medical information such as the name of the employee (unless the employee has signed an authorization to disclose his or her diagnosis)   Inform employees of the actions you have taken, including requiring employees who worked closely to the infected worker to go home.**

- **Let employees know about your sanitizing and cleaning efforts and remind them to seek medical attention if they exhibit symptoms. The failure to notify employees at your location of a confirmed case may be a violation of OSHA's general duty clause, which requires all employers to provide employees with a safe work environment.**

- **Employers should notify affected customers, visitors, and vendors and instruct those employees who came into contact with the sick employee within the 14 day period to go home and self-isolate for 14 days, working remotely if possible.**

COVID-19 NOTIFICATIONS FLOWCHART FOR COMPANIES WITH CONTRACTORS AND THIRD-PARTY VENDORS

Confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 reported to designated company rep.

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If individual is still at the workplace, isolate him/her until he/she is able to travel home.

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Did the person visit a company-operated site or facility in the past fourteen days?

N →

Did the person have known close contact in the past 14 days with an employee or contractor at a non-company operated work site but while directly working for the company?

N →

No notifications required.

Y ↓

Y

Did the person have close contact with anyone while at a company-operated site?

N

Y ↓

Ascertain dates and times and locations where close contact occurred and with whom close contact occurred.

Document each potential exposure date of notification and ultimate resolution of case (e.g., symptoms did not develop following 14 days of potential exposure).

As soon as practical, company rep coordinates notifications of non-company employee(s) with HR department of contractor's employer or third party's employer.

Information to be provided to employer shall be limited to:

(a) Confirmation of potential exposure to a known or suspected COVID-19 case; and

(b) Date, time, and location of potential exposure.

In no event shall any identifying information or demographic information on the known or suspected case be provided.

Inform employer that person(s) are ineligible to be on a company location until they meet the CDC guidance for discontinuing self-quarantine and request employer to notify the company if the individual develops symptoms.

As soon as practical, company rep shall notify employee(s) of their potential exposure.

Information to be provided to employee(s) shall be limited to:

(a) Confirmation of potential exposure to a known or suspected COVID-19 case; and

(b) Date, time, and location of potential exposure.

In no event shall any identifying information or demographic information on the known or suspected case be provided.

Advise individual to self-quarantine as per guidance from the CDC and notify employer if any symptoms develop.

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Designated company rep to document for each potential exposure date of notification and ultimate resolution of case (e.g., symptoms did not develop following 14 days of potential exposure).

Were any contractors or other third parties among those with whom the person had close contact?

Y

Related Guidance for COVID-19 Case Management

Establish how external and internal communications should be managed.

Determine who should resolve specific concerns from persons or entities that have been identified as requiring notification under guidance resolution.

4

ASSESS AND DISINFECT THE WORKPLACE

- Based on the size of the workplace and the potential breadth of exposure to coronavirus, the employer should consider closing immediately, coordinating with employees to work remotely if possible.

- After a confirmed case, follow the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the workplace. Your cleaning staff or a third-party sanitation contractor should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

- Employers should develop policies for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks. Training should include when to use personal protective equipment, what PPE is necessary, how to properly wear, use, and take off PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.

- Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with appropriate OSHA standards.

- Collaborate with local and state health departments to ensure appropriate protocols and guidelines, such as updated/additional guidance for cleaning and disinfection, are followed, including for identification of new potential cases of COVID-19.

5 REVIEW EMPLOYEE'S POLICIES

- **From April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, federal law mandates that employers with less than 500 employees provide workers with paid sick leave or paid family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.**

- **Employers qualify for dollar-for-dollar reimbursement through tax credits for all qualifying wages paid under the federal paid sick leave and paid FMLA mandates.**

- **Smaller employers with fewer than 50 employees may qualify for exemption from the federal requirement to provide leave due to school closings or child care unavailability if the leave requirements would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern.**

- **Follow your company's sick leave policies.**

Useful Links

CDC Business Resources
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
Office of the Governor
https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus
Texas Health and Human Services
https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/
Unemployment Texas Workforce Commission
https://www.twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers#overview
SBA (Small Business Association) EIDL & PPP Loans:
https;//www.sba.gob/

LOCAL LINKS
Jefferson County:
https://co.jefferson.tx.us/documents/Coronavirus%20Docs/coronavirusdocs.htm
City of Beaumont:
https://beaumonttexas.gov/covid19/
Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce
www.bmtecon.org

Sources:

Greater Houston Partnership
Texas Association of Business
Connecticut Business and Industry Alliance

The information provided in this toolkit will be updated as
more information becomes available and is up to date as of
June 19th 2020.