



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

## Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

Interim Guidance

Updated Sept. 11, 2020

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To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, 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 to protect them and the community.

A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

Critical Infrastructure workers who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

### INTERIM GUIDANCE

*This interim guidance pertains to critical infrastructure workers, including personnel in 16 different sectors of work including:*

- Federal, state, & local law enforcement
- 911 call center employees
- Fusion Center employees
- Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector
- Janitorial staff and other custodial staff
- Workers – including contracted vendors – in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a fever or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean work spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

- Employees should not share headsets or other objects that are near mouth or nose.
- Employers should increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.
- Employees and employers should consider pilot testing the use of face masks to ensure they do not interfere with work assignments.
- Employers should work with facility maintenance staff to increase air exchanges in room.
- Employees should physically distance when they take breaks together. Stagger breaks and don't congregate in the break room, and don't share food or utensils.

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be [sent home immediately](#). Surfaces in their workspace should be [cleaned and disinfected](#). Information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others at the facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time would be considered exposed.

Employers should implement the recommendations in the [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) to help prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Additional information about identifying critical infrastructure during COVID-19 can be found on the [DHS CISA website](#) [↗](#) or the CDC's specific [First Responder Guidance page](#).

# Essential critical workers who have been exposed to COVID-19

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## Steps for workers

Do	Don't
Take your temperature before work.	Stay at work if you become sick.
Wear a face mask at all times.	Share headsets or objects used near face.
Practice social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit.	Congregate in the break room or other crowded places.

## Steps for employers

- Do**
- Take employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to their starting work.
  - If an employee becomes sick during the day, send them home immediately.
  - Test the use of face masks to ensure they do not interfere with workflow.
  - Increase air exchange in the building.
  - Increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.



### Protect Your Health This Flu Season

**Essential workers:** protect yourself from flu this fall and winter with a flu vaccine. While getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, it can protect you from becoming sick with flu and needing medical care. Flu is another serious respiratory illness that can cause missed work, hospitalizations, and, in some cases, even death. The combination of flu and COVID-19 could overwhelm healthcare settings.

[Protect yourself, your family, and your community by getting a flu vaccine.](#)

## More Info

[Testing for workers in high-density critical infrastructure workplaces](#)

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[Guidance for Meat Packing Industry](#)

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[First responders and law enforcement](#)

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[Businesses and employers](#)

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[Correctional and detention facilities](#)

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Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases