

# Managing Employee Exposure to COVID-19

This guidance is provided to support the process of managing employees' who have been exposed to COVID-19, care for an individual exposed, traveled in high risk areas, or who are returning to work after exposure or possible exposure. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has outlined high risk areas.

## Guidance

**Risk Factors.** Employees should be directed to notify the designated district contact for the following reasons:

- Recently traveled to a Level III country
- Had close contact with others who have traveled to a Level III country
- Had contact with a family member or other individual confirmed to have COVID-19
- Traveled on a cruise ship or to other cities or states identified as high risk

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase across the United States and abroad, districts may want to use a recent travel reporting form to track travel of employees and students. The following forms may be helpful in the management of COVID-19 exposure and collecting information to be used to inform local decisions:

- [Recent Travel Form—Employee](#)
- [Recent Travel Form—Student](#)

**Exposure.** It is a good idea to establish procedures for employees to self-report exposure or possible exposure to COVID-19. These reports should be handled on a case-by-case basis with a district designee. This designee should monitor and track employees known to be in self-quarantine to ensure further steps in the return-to-work process are followed. The district may or may not require a release from a doctor to return to work. The following tools are available in the HR Library to help document the process and facilitate communications:

- [Human Resources Checklist for Employee Diagnosis or Exposure to COVID-19](#)
- [Sample Letter to Employee Diagnosed with or Exposed to COVID-19](#)
- [Sample Letter to Employee or Individual At-Risk of Exposure to COVID-19](#)

Employees may be eligible for leave provided under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) and the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA). Districts should ensure applicable leave benefits are applied.

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If an employee discloses a medical condition or disability that makes them more susceptible to contracting COVID-19, treat this information as a request for accommodation under the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). Engaging the employee in the [interactive process](#) to determine a [reasonable accommodation](#) would be needed. Additional resources in the HR Library can be accessed using the links provided.

To limit risk of exposure or infection of these employees, work from home options may serve as a reasonable accommodation. Do not force exclusion from the workplace unless you have sufficient information to believe the employee has been exposed to or infected with COVID-19 and may pose a risk to the health of others.

**Allowable Questions.** It is important for a district to be aware of the dos and don'ts of questioning employees about their exposure to COVID-19. If an employee has not self-reported but objective evidence or a reasonable belief exists that the individual has been exposed or infected with COVID-19, the district may ask the following questions:

- Has the employee been experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
- Has the employee recently traveled or been in close contact with someone who recently traveled to any of the Level III countries or a city or state experiencing an outbreak?
- Has the employee spent time with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

Questions regarding underlying medical conditions should be avoided. Avoid asking COVID-19 related travel questions to an employee based on an employee's race, ethnicity, or national origin.

**Confidentiality.** All information gathered, including information related to an employee's medical information, must always remain confidential. If a COVID-19 case is confirmed, you should inform coworkers that they may have been exposed in a way that does not identify the employee. Coordinating this effort through the HR office can ensure messaging is consistent and handled in a professional manner. Any medical-related documents received by an administrator or employee supervisor should be sent directly to the HR office.

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