

Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Test – Guidelines for Employees and Supervisors

10 Steps for Elected Officials/Department Heads/Employees – Adopted 07/07/2020

As the coronavirus continues its prevalence throughout the United States, it is probable that Saline County, as the employer (“County”), may continue to receive communications from an employee who shares that he or she has a positive test result for COVID-19, or a member of his or her household has tested positive. There is to be general practices for the County, via Human Resources, Elected Official, Department Head or Employee to consider when proceeding with “next steps” in support of safety and business/public service continuity.

- 1) If an employee or someone in their immediate household has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, the employee should not report to work, nor to be sent home to work remotely. The County should convey the use of emergency paid sick leave for qualifying reasons under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and/or be placed on medical/personal leave for a quarantine period as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- 2) The County does not need to notify the State Department of Health or the CDC, but should extend information or a request for additional guidance from local health officials, the Covid-19 Hotline or other such government agency. It is the healthcare provider who handles the positive test that is ultimately responsible for reporting to these agencies.
- 3) Employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19, or who have members in their household diagnosed with the virus, may be eligible for emergency paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other state leave laws. Because of the demands being placed on the medical community, the County is encouraged to be accommodating when asking for medical certification (see #10) so as not to place further burdens on the healthcare community.
- 4) The County should ask the employee to provide a list of individuals that came into “close contact”¹ with him/her during the two weeks leading up to the positive test. This would include employees, clients, vendors and any other business contacts. The County should communicate with these specific individuals. The County should use its best judgement in determining which individuals to contact; there is no clearly defined rule for this process.
- 5) When communicating with the “close contact”¹ employees and business contacts, be mindful of privacy and confidentiality laws. The County should not communicate the employees’ name. Instead, employers should generally share that an employee they have come in contact with recently has tested positive, or a member of their household has tested positive, for COVID-19. Any employees who came in “close contact”¹ with the employee should self-monitor, register to be tested via www.testnebraska.com or other, and/or with the ability to work remote while awaiting a test result, if appropriate, to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

- ¹ **NOTE:** The CDC defines “close contact” of someone who has been infected as “having been within approximately 6-feet of a person with Covid-19 for a prolonged period of time”.

- 6) Potentially exposed employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate, seek testing and follow CDC recommendations. Potentially exposed employees who do not have symptoms should seek testing and practice stringent social distancing for 14 days.
- 7) Steps should be taken to close off work areas used by the ill person. Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection. Follow additional CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting facility work areas.
- 8) The County, via the Department Head working together with the Human Resource Representative, can proactively communicate to its employees, or to those most likely effected, regarding potential exposure in the workplace, as warranted. This may be appropriate for some or every work environment, based on the employment location and the number of employees working within its localized environment. In addition, the County should convey all the measures and steps being taken to keep the public and employees protected to the extent possible.
- 9) Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19, or under quarantine if someone in their household has tested positive for COVID-19, according to the CDC, can discontinue quarantine after the following:
 - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers); AND
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved); AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or the date of their last positive test.
 - In addition, the County views itself as “critical infrastructure” thereby requiring those under quarantine due to becoming ill with COVID-19 to provide confirmation of a negative test result. (Due to test scheduling and availability, the County will reimburse for time, travel and lost work hours beyond current federal law recognized & adopted alongside county policy.)
- 10) Due to healthcare provider offices and/or medical facilities being extremely busy or potentially unable to provide documentation of a COVID-19 test result, or healthcare provider’s note to validate an illness in a timely manner, the County should not immediately require sick employees to provide that documentation for sick leave. (See #9 in returning to work.)

In addition, Elected Officials, Department Heads and employees should be cognizant of general CDC Guidelines – similarly represented herein, in addition to the importance of not overreacting to situations related to coronavirus to prevent panic or unsubstantiated rumor in the workplace.

- **NOTE:** The above is but a general outline of what is likely expected for “next steps” once a contagion is reported. However, in short – and in ALL cases, any Department Head presented information from an employee in their charge with an exposure or a confirmed positive case is to consult with Human Resources to discuss and refine “next steps” in provision for its situation.