Quick Glance for Employers: What to Do If There’s a COVID Case in the Workplace

When you learn of a positive case:

- Send the employee home.
- Ask the employee by phone when symptoms began, the shifts they worked, and with whom they had close contact. This means anyone who spent 15 minutes or more (cumulative) within 6 feet of the person, even if they were wearing masks.
- Notify all workers who were potentially exposed to the individual with COVID-19, making every effort to maintain that person’s confidentiality (e.g. “We have reason to believe that you have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID on (date).”)
- Provide quarantine instructions to all close contacts, available on ShastaReady.org under “Quarantine and Isolation Instructions.” Close contacts should stay home for 14 days after their last exposure to the patient, get tested, and monitor themselves for symptoms.
- Provide testing information to all close contacts, available on ShastaReady.org under “Get tested,” and explain sick leave rights.
- Report the case to Cal/OSHA within 8 hours of learning about the illness if the person was hospitalized.

If there are three or more cases in the workplace within a two-week period:

- Report the outbreak to Public Health by calling 225-5591 and stating that you need to report a workplace outbreak.

Should we close our business?

- This is not required, but businesses may opt to close in order to investigate the exposure and do thorough cleaning and disinfection, or if there isn’t enough staff to maintain operations.

When can an employee return to work?

- A COVID-positive patient can return to work 10 days after symptoms began, and if they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours, and symptoms are improved. If they didn’t have symptoms, they can return 10 days after the positive test.
- Quarantined people can return to work 14 days after their last exposure to the patient.
- Employees do not need to be tested to return to work.

What is a critical worker quarantine order?

- A critical worker quarantine order is reserved for health and safety organizations only.
- An organization may request a critical worker quarantine order from Shasta County Public Health when a critical service could not otherwise be provided, i.e. to provide minimum staff in a nursing home or a fire station would otherwise be closed.
- These rare exceptions must be approved and coordinated through Public Health, and are only considered when the person has no symptoms.

Please use this checklist to ensure you are prepared to respond quickly to an outbreak in the workplace. More information about all of the above items, along with information about sick leave, is available in the Employer Playbook for a Safe Reopening.