

COVID-19

What Employers Need to Know

COVID-19 is rapidly spreading worldwide, within the United States, and Shelby County, Tennessee. Within Shelby County, we have experienced ongoing exposures in a wide array of workplaces. The information provided below is designed to assist you in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- ✓ **Stay Current:** COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus. As such, our ability to understand the virus expands daily, resulting in frequent updates in the information. Rely upon experts to stay current.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Tennessee Department of Health

<https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>

Shelby County

<http://shelbytnhealth.com/>

City of Memphis

<https://covid19.memphistn.gov/>

- ✓ **Prevention of COVID-19:**
 - Travel Restrictions both outside and within the United States:
 - Avoid all non-essential travel. Avoid travel to locations with known transmission of COVID-19.
 - Implement self-monitoring for all employees who travel to locations with known transmission of COVID-19.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
 - Social Distancing:
 - Promote adherence to all executive orders and health directives.
 - Alter operations and staffing to promote social distancing.
 - Consider alternate work schedules and/or work from home options.
 - Hygiene
 - Promote and support preventive measures such as good hand hygiene at least 10 times a day and cough etiquette.
 - Clean work surfaces particularly high touch areas with EPA approved cleaning products at least once a day.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html
- ✓ **Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
 - PPE recommendations vary depending on an individual's roles and responsibilities.
 - Provide instruction to employees regarding recommended PPE.
- ✓ **Identify and Exclude Individuals with Illness from the Workplace**
 - Do not allow employees to work while ill. Support employees to remain at home if ill with fever, cough, or other signs of respiratory illness.

- Screen for fever, cough, and other signs of respiratory illness before entering the work area. Exclude individuals who screen positive.
- Be alert to individuals who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of illness. Exclude those individuals from the workplace.

✓ **Assist in Public Health Efforts to Isolate and/or Quarantine Individuals who have COVID-19 or who have been exposed to COVID-19:**

Employers may be amongst the first to be notified by an employee if/when the employee receives notice of a positive COVID-19 test. The following actions by the employer will further assist in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

1. Clean the individuals work area using an approved cleaning solution and recommended PPE.
2. Identify others who may have come in contact with the employee. Close contact is defined as having had close contact less than six (6) feet distance between all parties for ten (10) minutes or more during the time that the employee was infectious (infectious period). The infectious period is defined as two (2) days prior to the onset of the first signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
3. Once contacts are identified, immediately inform the employees that they have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and that they should not return to work for 14 days. During the 14-days of quarantine, employees should monitor their temperature, and for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily. If signs and symptoms of COVID-19 occur, the employee should contact their healthcare provider.

Note: The Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) will be contacting the employee with COVID-19, the employer and those identified as coming in contact with the employee during the infectious period. However, there may be delays in reporting the positive result to the SCHD. ***There is no need to wait for the SCHD to implement the above protective measures.***

4. Maintain the privacy of the employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, including all contacts.

✓ **Support Return to Work**

Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 can return to work under the following conditions:

- Fever free for three (3) days without anti-fever medication, **and**
- At least seven (7) days since the onset of signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- A testing based decision to return to work can be also followed by two (2) negative PCR tests within 24 hours.
- Contacts of COVID-19 positive individuals may return to work within 14 days if no symptoms, however, if they are essential personnel and need to be back sooner they may work at any time during the 14 days provided they have a surgical mask on at all times and practice hand hygiene. ***If symptoms develop they should immediately leave work.***

✓ **Provide Information and Support to Employees**

- Continue to provide employees with the latest information on COVID-19 and information on what you are doing to promote their health and safety.
- Support access to employee assistance programs as the social, emotional and financial impact of COVID-19 is significant.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Social Distancing is a set of measures that result in the physical distance between people to reduce the risk of exposure to a contagious disease. Measures include maintaining a minimum of 6 feet distance from other people, avoiding gatherings of 10 or more people and avoiding large crowds.

Self-Monitoring separates people who have traveled to countries or communities with known community transmission of a contagious disease and are not known to have had direct exposure to a contagious disease. Usually, these persons are not sick.

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. Usually, these persons are not sick.

Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.