**Employer Preparedness – COVID-19**

**(As of 3/20/2020)**

**Employer Guidelines for Return to Work due to Concern for COVID-19**

Given the community risk of COVID-19, we recommend that all employers adopt a return to work (RTW) screening process, that likely are more stringent than previous policies. This recommendation is IN ADDITION to the employer’s normal RTW policies.

Who is required to obtain a RTW clearance note?

1. Anyone that left work due to a fever or any respiratory symptom
2. Any employee that missed any work due to fever or any respiratory symptom
3. Any employee that was kept home because of a fever or any respiratory symptom
4. Any employee who had a positive COVID-19 screening questionnaire.

The following RTW procedures are recommended:

1. Employee is required to obtain a RTW note from a medical provider that includes the information (clearance) from his/her treating medical provider.
2. If the employee was not evaluated by a medical professional, but instead practiced self-care or self-isolation, then employer should arrange for a RTW evaluation at a Prime clinic or a “company doctor”.
3. Prime is offering RTW evaluations for employees that have been symptoms free for 72 hours without medication.
4. If going to a clinic is inconvenient for the employers or the employees, then Prime can offer telemedicine RTW evaluation (TX, LA, NM, and certain other states), as it is an appropriate option.

**Factors of consideration:**

1. NOT everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19, even if they had the possible symptoms or was around a suspected COVID-19 patient.
2. Even if they had the COVID-19 test and tested positive, their medical providers may not have offered them any specific medical care or treatment.
3. Not all tests are 100% accurate. Clinical histories and examinations still play a major role in the medical recommendations.

**COVID-19 RTW CLEARANCE**

If you were out of work or left work for any duration for any fever or respiratory symptoms, we kindly request you to complete the top section of this form and ask your medical provider to complete the bottom section of this form.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee Name:** |  | Date: |  |
| **Employer:** |  | Job Site or #: |  |
| **CRAFT:** |  |  |  |

# 

# While you were away from work, have you had any of the following symptom?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date of your first fever? |  | Or none |
| Date you were first short of breath? |  | Or none |
| Date of your first cough? |  | Or none |
| Date of your other symptoms? |  | What symptom? |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date you first left work? |  | Last symptom date? |  |
| Were you evaluated by a medical professional? |  | If yes, what was your diagnosis? |  |
| Did you have a Flu test? | YES/NO | If yes, the result? | Pos/Neg |
| Did you have a Coronavirus test? | YES/NO | If yes, date & result? |  |

**If you had a coronavirus test, please bring a copy of the test report to the RTW medical provider.**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Medical Provider: Please complete this section:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is the patient your regular patient? | Yes / No |
| Has the patient been viral symptom free for 72 hours? | Yes / No |
| Have the viral symptoms onset been > 7 days? | Yes / No |
| Is the patient cleared to do all normal duties without restrictions? | Date: |
| Is there any reason to continue to medically restrict the patient? | Yes / No |

Comments:

**Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Provider Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Practice Name, address, and phone #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**General Employer Recommendations:**

* Educate the employees. Like many other issues, if you do not offer objective information, they will seek information from alternative and potentially unreliable sources.
* Flu vaccine can decrease an employees’ exposure to other communicable diseases, including COVID-19.
* Employees and family should familiarize themselves with recommendations to protect themselves and their workplace from getting and spreading respiratory illnesses like COVID-19.
* Older persons or those with severe chronic conditions should take special precautions because they are at a higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.
* Consider policy to ask the employees to report and self-isolate for 14 days if they have or anyone they are a close contact (same household) have had recent travel to China, Italy, Iran, Japan, South Korea, or certain parts of Europe, or have had recent pneumonia of unknown cause.

If your location has site medical or nursing resources, then the provider can offer management to be on the lookout for:

* Employees who recently traveled from China, Italy, Iran, Japan, South Korea, most parts of Europe or who have symptoms associated with COVID-19.
* People who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or patients with pneumonia of unknown cause.
* If an employee is a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider and tell them about the symptoms and the exposure.

**Employers’ Recommended Policy Related to Coronavirus Control**

Many employers already have travel policies to discontinue non-essential travel and work-from-home quarantine for employees who have been to infected areas in recent weeks. General recommendations to advise your employees are:

1. Sick employee = stay home employee
2. Notify HR if you or your family member(s) will be travelling to high risk areas
3. Meet with your manager to discuss your working arrangements
4. Take extra steps in keeping your workspace clean
5. Keep workspaces-phones and cell phones clean and sanitised
6. Wash hands frequently especially after visiting the washroom
7. Managers: make sure each key employee has a backup if they need to take time off from work
8. Avoid non-essential travel
9. Always cover your mouth when you cough and or sneeze

**In Case of a medical issue:**

* Please notify your supervisor immediately if you become ill
* Supervisors should notify HR and manger immediately of any possible alarm
* When signs of illness, respiratory symptoms, cough, shortness or difficulty breathing do occur, please stay at home, do not come to work, and notify your supervisor.
* If you have medical concern, beyond mild symptoms, please contact your personal medical provider.

If you have any questions regarding any medical management policy, please contact your Prime supervising medical provider.

**Prime’s Infection Management Stages**

Prime has assembled a detailed plan to enhance employees’ protection from the spread of the coronavirus. This plan has 6 stages, reflective of the local spread of the disease. We are currently at Stage 4 affecting all Prime facilities.

* Stage 1: community spread/person-to-person transmission identified in unrelated countries.

Action:

* Monitoring development
* Stage 2: community spread confirmed in several countries, including United States.

Actions:

* + Restrict business travel to and from affected areas,
  + Educate all employees related to company policies, and self-care,
  + Managerial plan to stock up on certain infection control supplies.
  + Discuss with your managers related to your departmental activities, (business continuing plan) if stage 3 is declared.
  + Have employees notify their supervisor of any planned or actual travel to or contact with persons traveled internationally or from known affected areas.
* Stage 3: more than 100 confirmed community spread cases community spread confirmed in Prime’s operating regions within the United States

Actions:

* + Suspend all non-essential business travel
  + Educate employees and their families related to infection control,
  + Limit all non-essential face-to-face meetings
  + Suspend all other face-to-face meetings or group gatherings
* Stage 4: confirmed COVID-19 community-spread case anywhere in your geographic region.

Action:

* + Face-to-face group (greater than 10) meetings eliminated
  + Employee daily questionnaire screening (Prime has customizable for each employer or site on-line questionnaire) prior to coming to work
  + Medical screening prior to entry into any Prime facility.
* Stage 5: confirmed COVID-19 case within any Prime facility

Action:

* + Executives will consider temporary partial or complete shutdown of the affected facility until threat of spread within the facility has passed
  + Daily monitoring of all affected employees
  + If facility remains operational, then daily “deep cleaning” of the entire facility
  + Site manager to report daily progress
* Stage 6: virus spread is contained, no further threat

**Details of Stage 3 Management**

* **Suspend all non-essential business travel**
  + Travel can expose employees to individuals infected with COVID-19 and although the transmission risk remains low, it is best to limit exposure.
* **Educate employees and their families related to infection control**
  + Document updates sent to all employee through HR.
  + Include information that can be shared with the family of the employee as the greatest exposure risk will come from close contacts at home.
* **Limit all non-essential face-to-face meetings**
  + If meetings are necessary, try to maintain a separation of 6 feet and ensure meeting area is thoroughly disinfected.
* **Suspend all other face-to-face meetings or group gatherings**
  + Group gatherings may unnecessarily expose employees and increase their exposure risk.

**Details of Stage 4 Management**

* **Face-to-face group (greater than 10) meetings eliminated**
  + This strategy is to limit the amount of exposure to potentially infected individuals.
* **Employee daily questionnaire screening prior to coming to work.** 
  + Employees will complete an online EME questionnaire or paper screening questionnaire and the questionnaire will be reviewed by a supervisor prior to the start of the workday.
  + Diligent personal and area hygiene to limit co-workers or clients’ infection risk.
* **Medical screening prior to entry into the PRIME facility.**
  + All persons entering the PRIME facility must do so through one single point of entry.
  + Either prior to entry or immediately upon entry, the person must answer the screening questionnaire and have their temperature taken.
  + If screening is positive, the person should be instructed to not enter the PRIME facility (if screened prior to entry) or immediately brought to designated isolation area (if screened after entry into facility)
  + Next action should follow the protocol below.

**Although the risk of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 remains low, any PRIME employee working in a PRIME facility that has reached Stage 4 and has a compromised immune system, either from personal illness or medication, should consider discussing their individual risk with their treating physician. They should also contact HR and their supervisor for information related to the possibility of needing to take PTO and staying home.**

Subsequent stage details will follow as the situation escalates.

**Management Policy Consideration Guidelines:**

Departmental managers should immediately develop plans for:

Work-from-home policies.

1. Ill workers – compensated?
2. Quarantined workers without known illness – compensated?
3. Work progress monitoring, while supervisor or worker at home?
4. Policy to efficiently contact a Prime professional if there is a privacy or other concerns.

Workers that cannot work from home:

1. Compensation policy: hourly worker, salaried workers?
2. Pre-selected guidelines related to when to resume work at employer’s sites: as of now, there is none. Prime will continue to monitor recommendation guidelines that may be applicable for each specific worksite, related to recommendation for site shut down or resumption of work.

Partial work shutdown.

1. Which site to shut down, complete or partial?
2. How are returning workers monitored? Prime recommends that each returning worker complete a Prime on-line questionnaire daily prior to arriving at worksite. This process adds an extra layer of assurance of protection for all workers and affords employee’s need for privacy.
3. If there is a medical/nursing staff on-site, then each worker will report to the nursing site for temperature check, prior to commencing work. Any worker that has a fever will be sent home.
4. Prime site nurse shall coordinate with the supervising physician related to site nursing screening procedures and station sanitation procedures.
5. A mask is not recommended for general public use. However, each site’s supervising physician shall advise the site management related to non-medical personnel’s use of masks.
6. If there is a potential for partial work shutdown, then site management should stock certain levels of cleaning agents and protective goggles, masks, and gloves for certain workers at a higher level of transmission risk, such as security guards.

Currently Prime service regions are at Stage 3. However, if stage 4 is declared by your manager:

Actions:

1. Follow work-from-home policy.
2. Consider limited shut down.
3. Implement site screening – daily screening of employees physically coming to your site. Daily questionnaire of all employees prior to their arrival onsite and temperature check upon their arrival. (Prime has the infrastructure for the questionnaires and screening support)
4. Daily site cleaning (please see more detailed guidelines).
5. Educate employees related to person-to-person disease transmission (Prime has specific details that can be posted and shared).
6. As always, if the employee or the employee’s family has flu-like symptoms, then the employee is advised to seek his/her personal medical provider’s advice and STAY home.

**General Coronavirus Prevention Tips – For All Employees**

Please read below as we are taking this seriously!

**How the Coronavirus spreads**

According to U.S. CDC, coronaviruses are commonly spread through:

1. **The air**

Through viral particles or droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Such airborne droplets can infect another person who breathes it in.

1. **Close personal contact**

Such as by shaking hands or touching an infected person, followed by touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

1. **Surfaces contaminated with viral particles**

Viral particles can settle on surfaces within 1 meter of an infected person. Touching these surfaces followed by ingestion can lead to infection.

1. **Fecal contamination**

Although possible, it is not a likely route.

**Here’s what we need you to do:**

1. **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time.**

If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

1. **Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes with unwashed hands.**

The average adult does this 16 times in an hour. So you’ll have to remind yourself often.

1. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**

If you know that a colleague, partner or client is unwell, suggest a conference call or reschedule the meeting.

1. **Maintain your general health.**

Eat healthily and keep fit by maintaining your exercise routine.

1. **Get a flu shot.**

The flu shot will not help with the current coronavirus, but it can lessen the risk of you catching the flu and having to visit the doctor.

1. **Clean and disinfect your workplace, especially if you share workspace.**
2. **Most importantly, just as with the seasonal flu, stay home when you or your family is sick.**

**Again, disinfecting your workspace: especially when there is community spread in your region.**

**How to disinfect your workspace**

To disinfect your workspace, use a bleach solution (mix up to 2% of household bleach with 98% water) or alcohol solution with 60% alcohol and follow these steps:

1. Clear your desk of items and wipe down your tabletop with the solution.
2. Mobile phones are especially germy. Remove your cover (if any) and wipe down both the phone and the cover.
3. Wipe down your chair, particularly the arms, with the solution.
4. If you have a door to your office, make sure to clean both sides of the door handle thoroughly.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SYMPTOM** | **COVID-19** | **COMMON COLD** | **FLU** | **ALLERGIES** |
| **Fever** | Common | Rare | Common | Mild |
| **Dry Cough** | Common | Mild | Common | Sometimes |
| **Shortness of Breath** | Common | No | No | Mostly nasal |
| **Headaches** | Sometimes | Rare | Common | Sometimes |
| **Aches and Pains** | Sometimes | Common | Common | No |
| **Sore Throat** | Sometimes | Common | Common | Mild |
| **Fatigue** | Sometimes | Sometimes | Common | Sometimes |
| **Diarrhea** | Rare | No | Sometimes | No |
| **Runny Nose** | Rare | Common | Sometimes | Common |
| **Sneezing** | No | Common | No | Common |

**What Constitute an “Exposure”?**

The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person.

1. Between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for greater than 65 minutes or exposure to direct respiratory secretions.
2. Transmission of coronavirus from contaminated surfaces to a person has not been documented. The virus may live on surface from hours to days. Therefore, **Clean AND disinfect**frequently touched surfaces**daily**.
3. Therefore, recommended employer guideline to determine if an employee is “exposed” or not are:
   1. Any employee that comes into contact within six feet with an infected person (pre- or post-confirmation). Sharing the same office-floor may not be an exposure.
   2. Any employee that shares a workspace with an infected person within 24 days of the infected person’s use. Incidental pass-by of an area is NOT an exposure. Casual contact is NOT an exposure.

**What Do I Do if I Suspect COVID-19 Exposure?**

**SUSPECTED** COVID-19 patients are those that a medical provider has professionally recommended that the patient be evaluated for the possibility of being tested for coronavirus infection.

**CONFIRMED** or **PRESUMED** COVID-19 patients are those that have been tested by either at a state or the CDC lab and reported as positive. (Commercial screening labs are in process) These reports normally take 1-3 days to process and report.

Therefore,

If the employee is professionally identified as a suspected COVID-19 patient, then he/she should be isolated at home and follow his/her medical provider’s advice.

If another employee is exposed to a **SUSPECTED** COVID-19 patient/employee, NO ADDITIONAL ACTION IS NECESSARY.

1. The employee should notify their supervisor and continue routine hand hygiene protocols, social distancing, and other routine use of regular personal protective equipment (PPE) utilization.
2. The supervisor should remind the employee’s close contact co-worker to self-monitoring of symptoms and routine self-care as described above.
3. If the co-workers become symptomatic, then he/she should be self-isolated and follow the advice of his/her medical provider.

If an employee WITHOUT PPE is exposed to a **CONFIRMED** COVID-19 patient(pre- or post-confirmation), please send the employee home. NO testing is required at that point in time. The employee should be instructed to check their temperature twice daily for 14 days from the date of exposure and call their personal medical provider if the temperature is at or above 100.4o or if they develop other signs/symptoms of a respiratory tract infection. The medical provider may choose to test the employee for COVID-19 infection.

**Instructions to Employees Regarding Home Quarantine Period**

Employees who have been sent to home quarantine because he/she was exposed to confirmed COVID-19 patients should:

* Remain in their home and monitor temperature twice daily.
  + If their temperature is >100.4 or the employee develops other signs/symptoms of a respiratory infection, the employee should contact his/her personal medical provider to determine if testing is needed and arrange if appropriate.
* Avoid contact with immunocompromised family and friends.
* If a family member develops symptoms, Prime recommends monitoring temperatures. Questions around clinical symptoms should go to their personal medical provider for assistance and guidance.

**Should I Offer Testing for My Employees?**

**In general, the answer is NO. Tests are currently “reserved” for ill patients.**

1. As with ALL medical test, a negative test does not guarantee a negative virus illness or carrier.
2. All relatively reliable tests have laboratory delay. Therefore, results are not of immediate usefulness.
3. All coronavirus “confirmatory” tests are controlled by either the state Department of Health, as in Louisiana, or the CDC. These tests are not ordered by individual treating physicians, but instead are ordered by public health officials only on patients that meet certain clinical criteria.
4. Several commercial labs offer other forms of presumptive testing.
5. Commercial lab tests may be ordered by any licensed health care practitioner. As with the confirmatory tests, these tests are also only allowed to be ordered if certain clinical criteria are met. These tests are also not indicated in patients who are “asymptomatic”.
6. Given the above, be aware of any commercial entity currently offering a coronavirus or COVID-19 “test” Buyers be aware; know what you are buying.

**So, if there is no good test, then what do I do?**

1. Prevention is still the best medicine. Emphasize prevention.
2. There are commercial labs that do offer certain very reasonable, but limited, screening tests.
3. If you are interested, please contact Prime medical office and we can offer some professional guidance.

**COVID-19 SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE**

An outbreak of 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) requires early and effective detection of suspected cases to limit the risk of exposure to others. We are kindly requesting you to complete the following questions and to have your temperature checked by us.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

# 

# Within the last 24 hours, have you had any of the following symptoms? Tick all that apply:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fever/Chills |  | Cough |  |
| Shortness of Breath |  | Difficulty breathing |  |
| Sore throat |  | Your own temperature reading? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **During the last 14 days have you been to ANY foreign country or on a cruise?**  **If YES, please specify the city/location and when:** | **YES / NO** |
| Did you spend time (more than 5 minutes) within speaking distance with a person who had been to ANY foreign country? | **YES / NO** |
| Did you spend >5 minutes time within 6 feet of a person who did have, or was under investigation for COVID-19? | **YES / NO** |

**If you have any of the symptoms listed above, you are required to contact your medical provider and not enter the PRIME facility.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Temp. Taken:** |  |
| **Employee cleared to enter PRIME facility:** | **YES / NO** |
| **Medical Screener, name:** |  |
| **Medical Screener, sig.:** |  |

**PRIME Facility COVID-19 Screening Protocol**

ALL persons entering the Stage 4 PRIME facility is required to complete the questionnaire.

If the person has any of the symptoms listed or has a temperature greater or equal to 100.4 F, the person should be told they are not allowed to enter the PRIME facility.

If the person has any positive answers to travel history of the listed countries within the last 14 days, they should be told they are not allowed to enter the PRIME facility.

If the person has a positive travel history and symptoms and/or a temperature greater or equal to 100.4 F, they should not be allowed into the PRIME facility and they should be told to return to their vehicle and remain there until further instruction. The PRIME physician should then be notified, along with the appropriate state department of health. If already in the PRIME facility, they should be moved to the designated isolation area.

Immediately contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) Infectious Disease Epidemiology Hotline at 1-(800) 256-2748 if you suspect a patient with 2019-nCoV in Louisiana.

**Immediately contact the Texas DSHS COVID‑19 Call Center at** 1-877-570-9779 if you suspect a patient with 2019-nCoV in Texas.