



**IOWA**  
economic development

**IDPH**  
IOWA Department  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

IOWA  
**WORKFORCE**  
DEVELOPMENT

# MITIGATING COVID-19 FOR IOWA BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Frequently asked questions with answers  
to assist Iowan's with virus containment

# COVID-19

ACT NOW!



WEAR A MASK



STAY 6 FEET APART



AVOID CROWDS



Your Health

Vaccines

Cases & Data

Work & School

Healthcare Workers

Health Depts

More

Community, Work & School

Vaccination

Health Equity +

Community Mitigation Framework

Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Ventilation +

Workplaces & Businesses -

Guidance for Businesses & Employers

FAQs for Workplaces & Businesses

Testing in Non-Healthcare Workplaces

Consent Elements and

## Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

Updated Mar. 1, 2021 Languages Print

### Summary of Recent Changes

Updates as of Dec 31, 2020

#### As of December 31, 2020

- Expanded section on in-person or virtual health checks
- Added a section on considerations for testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19
- Addressed [shortened quarantine options](#). Shortening quarantine may increase willingness to adhere to public health recommendations; however, shortened

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Preparedness:

COVID-19  
Business  
Assistance

## Preparedness:

**Question:** What can we do to mitigate potential COVID-19 exposure in our business or facility?

### Answer:

- △ Screening of employees: The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends posting signage at the facility entrance indicating no one should enter the establishment if they currently have symptoms or have been around anyone with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.
- △ Conducting temperature scans of employees at facility entrances
- △ Encouraging social distancing/increased spacing between workers
- △ Using face coverings, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends face coverings in the workplace, especially for those employees that are not able to maintain proper social distancing.
- △ Changing employee schedules and company layout, shift changes, additions or variations to assist in spreading out your employees
- △ Staggering of employee breaks to limit employee interaction
- △ Providing handwashing stations/hand sanitizer, face coverings or PPEs or encouraging employees to use masks
- △ Increasing ventilation in the facility
- △ Installing physical barriers, like plastic sneeze guards
- △ Ensuring leave policies are flexible
- △ Encouraging sick employees to stay home
- △ Conducting COVID-19 education of employees on risk factors and protective behavior
- △ Communicating all information in native languages of all employees
- △ Continuous cleaning and sanitizing of common areas of the facility (restrooms, locker rooms, break or cafeteria space)

Preparedness:

Question: What is the difference between self-isolation and self-quarantine?

Answer:

- △ **Self-isolation or isolation** keeps someone who is infected with a virus (like COVID-19) away from others, even in their home. A separate room and a separate bathroom are recommended for individuals in isolation, if possible.
- △ **Self-quarantine or quarantine** keeps someone who might have been exposed to a virus away from others. People in self-quarantine should stay home separate themselves from others and monitor their health.

Preparedness:

**Question:** The CDC has recently updated their quarantine protocol for COVID-19. Can you provide us with details of this update?

**Answer:**

Quarantine guidance for individuals identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case (December 2020)

△ Individuals exposed to COVID-19 may develop symptoms from 2-14 days after exposure. However, individuals identified as a close contact to someone infectious with COVID-19 can reduce the length of their quarantine from 14 days via the following options:

- • Quarantine can end after Day 10 if no symptoms have developed.
- • Quarantine can end after Day 7 if the exposed person tests negative and no symptoms have developed. The specimen must be collected within 48 hours before the end of quarantine (i.e. not earlier than Day 5). The quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.

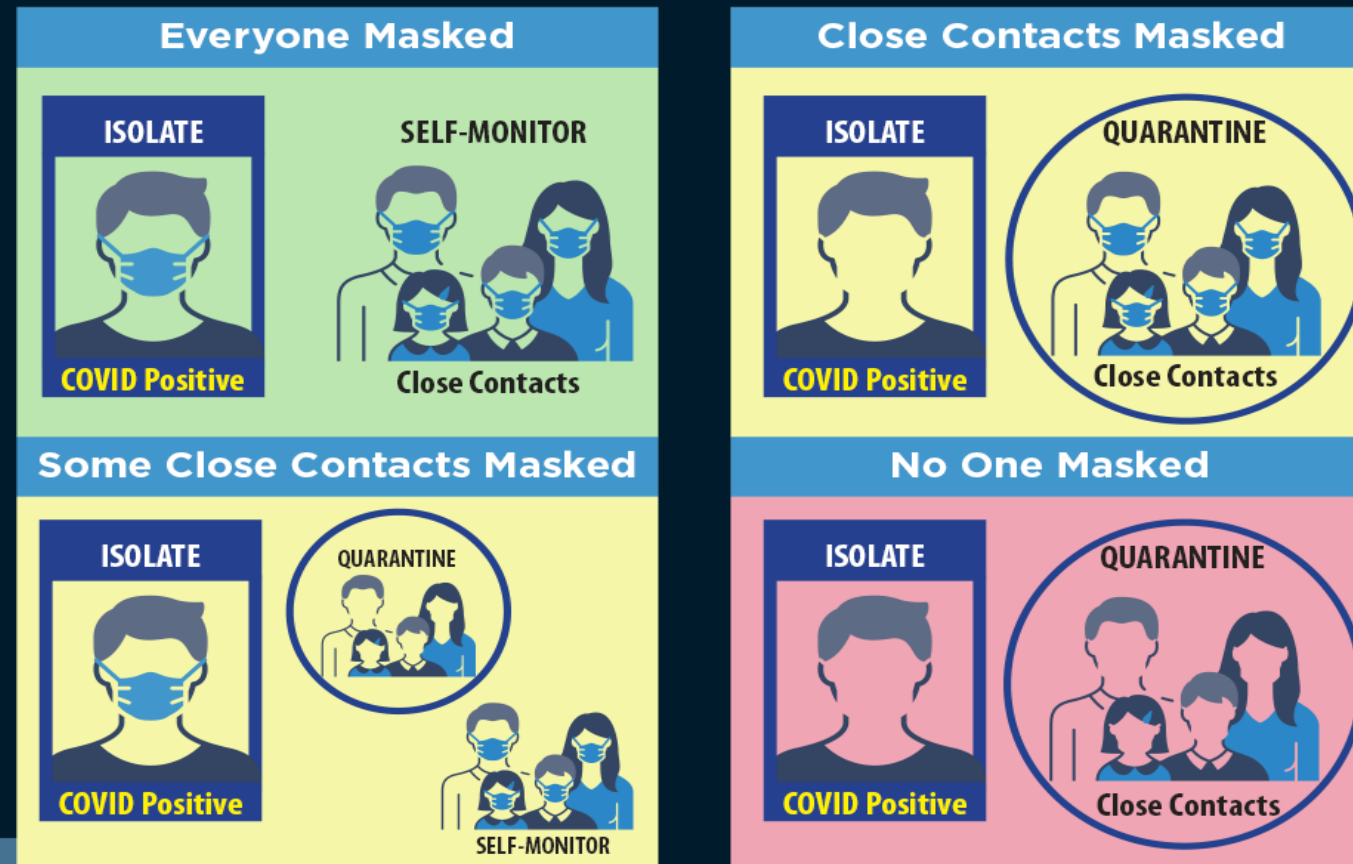
In both cases, continue to monitor for symptoms through Day 14.

**Answer:**

- △ For non-healthcare, non-residential settings, quarantine is no longer recommended if a potential exposure occurs while both the infectious individual and the close contacts are wearing face coverings consistently and correctly.
- △ In all scenarios below, an individual is considered a **close contact** when they have been within **6 feet of the COVID-19 positive individual for 15 minutes.**

Preparedness:

**Question:** When is the correct time to quarantine?



## Preparedness:

### Question:

Where can I find the latest information on COVID-19 in Iowa, including the Governor's Emergency Proclamations?

### Answer:

- △ The latest information on COVID-19 in Iowa can be found at, <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/>
- △ The Governor's Emergency Proclamations can be located at, <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/proclamations>

## Preparedness:

**Question:** Does an individual that has been vaccinated for COVID have to quarantine if exposed to a COVID positive individual?

## Answer:

△The answer is NO according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with a few stipulations (see link to the article below). One, if it has been two full weeks since receiving your final dose of the vaccine, two, it has not been longer than three months since you received the vaccine and three, you do not have COVID symptoms.

[Do Vaccinated People Need to Quarantine After COVID-19 Exposure? \(prevention.com\)](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0615-covid-19-quarantine.html)



Testing:

**Question:** Who should be tested for COVID-19?

**Answer:**

- △ Any Iowan can be tested for current infection with COVID-19 through Test Iowa; [www.testiowa.com](http://www.testiowa.com)
- △ Serology testing can determine whether a person was likely previously infected with COVID-19
- △ For additional information on testing the US Food & Drug Administration has information on testing basics; <https://www.fda.gov/media/140161/download>

## Testing:

**Question:** May an employer require an employee to produce a negative COVID test before returning to work?

Answer:

- △ The Iowa Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) do not recommend retesting as a condition for return to work for several reasons including the possibility of false positives and the need to prioritize the use of testing and clinical resources in places where a diagnosis is most impactful for protecting the public's health. Instead we continue to recommend based on national guidance that the clinical release of 10 days with at least 1 day fever free with symptoms improving be used.
  - Additionally, the CDC examined appropriate time periods following initial SARS-CoV-2 infection or illness to investigate reinfection. Since August 2020, CDC has recommended *against* the need for retesting persons with asymptomatic infection within 90 days of first SARS-CoV-2 infection or illness because evidence *to date* suggests that reinfection does not occur within this time window ([CDC Guidance on Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)).
- △ Iowa Labor Commissioner Rod Roberts has also communicated that OSHA would not “require” anything more than the CDC would require.

## Testing:

**Question:** Our business has multiple employees that recently have tested positive for COVID-19. What testing options are available for our employees to prevent further spread of the virus?

## Answer:

- △ Iowa businesses wanting to perform PCR or serology testing, in accordance with the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) testing criteria, should arrange testing for their staff through their occupational health provider and send specimens to SHL for testing. Or direct staff to pursue testing through Test Iowa.
- △ Iowa businesses wanting to perform PCR or serology testing outside of the SHL testing criteria should arrange testing for their staff in coordination with their occupational health provider using a clinical or commercial laboratory. The cost of this testing is the responsibility of the business or the employee. Occupational health providers may identify a local clinical laboratory performing COVID-19 testing. Different test assays may have different collection methods and/or performance characteristics. A list of commercial laboratories performing COVID-19 testing is available here: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/emergency-use-authorizations#coronavirus2019> (scroll down to “Test Kit Manufacturers and Commercial Laboratories Table”).

## Business Operations:

**Question:**  
Do you have recommendations for cleaning a facility after a COVID-19 positive case has been identified in a facility/business?

### Answer:

#### △ Clean

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
- Surfaces and objects in public places, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.
- High touch surfaces include:
- Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

#### △ Disinfect

- Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectants. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:
- Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label).
- Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

## Business Operations:

**Question:** Are businesses required to report positive COVID-19 cases to the government?

### Answer:

- △ No, businesses are not required to report cases to the government. Laboratory results are communicated to the patient and the provider who ordered them. They are required by law to be reported by the lab to public health. Public health performs case investigation follow-up and reinforces isolation and quarantine recommendations and has the legal authority to share information on positive cases with businesses when it is necessary for an investigation.
- △ **Individuals who do not comply with public health isolation and quarantine recommendations may be subject to locally issued legally enforceable orders.**
- △ If a business has concern about a specific situation, especially someone not isolating or quarantining, they are encouraged to contact their local public health department.

## Business Operations:

**Question:** An employee who was COVID positive in June is re-exposed to COVID in November. Do they need to self-isolate?

## Answer:

▲ Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has communicated COVID positive individuals are immune to COVID for 90 days after their positive test. Individuals exposed after this 90-day period are at risk of re-infection. If someone develops symptoms consistent with COVID within 90 days of the initial infection, they should isolate and reach out to a healthcare provider for alternative diagnosis considerations and further guidance. The Iowa Department of Public Health doesn't recommend re-testing during this 90-day period as it may come back positive due to initial infection.

## Business Operations:

**Question:** We have an employee whose spouse works in a senior care facility that has reported a positive COVID-19 case. What is the appropriate course of action for our company?

### Answer:

△ If the spouse is ill with COVID-19 symptoms and your employee has been in close contact (defined as being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) from 48 hours before the spouse got sick until 10 days from when her illness began) your employee should self-quarantine for 7 days after his last day of contact if he has tested negative for COVID or 10 days if he has not been tested. If the spouse is well and has tested negative there is not a need for the employee to self-quarantine at this point.

Business  
Operations:

**Question:** What if an employee who should be self-isolating or quarantining does not do so?

**Answer:**

△ As a business, you may send an employee home to prevent spreading of the virus. A period of quarantine or isolation can be legally mandated by public health through Iowa Code 641.1. We first encourage people through education to follow quarantine or isolation. If someone is concerned that a quarantine or isolation is being violated, they should contact their local public health organization.



## Business Operations:

**Question:** We have an employee who was exposed to a COVID-19 positive case and they themselves have tested negative. Can they return to work or do they need to self-quarantine?

## Answer:

△Our recommendation is to self-quarantine for 7 days after close contact with a confirmed case if the exposed person has tested negative for COVID or 10 days if the person has not been tested (CDC Updated Guidelines as of 12/2/20). The negative test is just a point in time, so the person could be positive tomorrow. Also, asymptomatic people can spread the virus. Therefore, they must quarantine for 7 or 10 days unless a critical worker in which case they need to follow critical worker guidance.

## Business Operations:

**Question:** An employee has a 4<sup>th</sup> grade child who was exposed to a positive COVID student at school and must self-quarantine. Must the employee self-quarantine as well?

## Answer:

△ No, the employee does not need to self-quarantine as they did not have any exposure, they just live with someone who did and is well. If the child tests positive for COVID and/or someone in the residence becomes sick, then the employee should self-quarantine.

## Business Operations:

**Question:** An employee tests positive for COVID and completes the 10-day self-isolation. Several days later another member of the household tests positive for COVID. Does the employee have to self-isolate?

### Answer:

△ No, after a person tests positive and has recovered they do not need to re-enter quarantine for a period of 90 days after their positive test. The CDC and the Iowa Department of Public Health consider someone immune during this timeframe.

## Business Operations

**Question:** An employee has a member of their household who was exposed to COVID and has tested positive. Must the employee self-quarantine?

### Answer:

- △ Yes, the employee, as a household exposure to the COVID positive individual, must quarantine for 7 days after the completion of the COVID positive individual's infectious period if the exposed individual has tested negative for COVID or 10 days after the completion of the COVID positive individual's infectious period if the individual is not tested. The individual testing positive, is considered infectious two days prior and throughout the 10 days of isolation. The positive individual should isolate away from the rest of the household in a separate bedroom and bathroom, if possible.
- △ Additional information on when to self-quarantine can be found at the CDC's link below;  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

## Business Operations:

**Question:** Are businesses required to inform fellow employees of positive COVID cases within their business?

## Answer:

△ It would be best practice to notify other personnel in the office that had close contact with the exposed person - but we **do not** recommend mass notification with name of infected person. Close contacts should also be identified during the case investigation.

## Business Operations:

**Question:** Will it violate HIPAA to clean the workstation of an employee who tested positive.

### Answer:

△ If possible, the workstation should be cleaned after hours to decrease the chances of identifying the employee who tested positive. The cleaning should also focus on frequently touched areas and shared spaces.

Business  
Operations:

**Question:** When is the start date of the 10 days for isolation for a positive COVID-19 test?

**Answer:**

△The 10 days starts with the day of the test (not the day that results were released) OR the onset of symptoms.

## Business Operations:

We have an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19. When can this employee return to work?

### Answer:

According to the CDC people are no longer considered contagious if:

- △ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **AND**
- △ At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and with improved symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).



## Business Operations:

**Question:** Are there any recommendations for business/company travel?

### Answer:

#### △ Updated travel related guidance for COVID-19

- COVID-19 virus is circulating across the United States. While there is no longer a recommendation to self-quarantine for 14 days after returning home from travel outside of Iowa, within the United States or internationally (as long as the traveler remains well and has not been identified as a close contact of an ill individual), travelers should continue to:
  - Clean your hands often.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use the hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub your hands together until they feel dry.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Avoid close contact with others.
  - Keep 6 feet of physical distance from others.
  - Avoiding close contact is especially important if you are at higher risk of getting sick from COVID-19.
  - Wear a cloth face covering in public.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes.
  - Do not travel if you are sick.

## Regulatory:

**Question:** Do I have to record or report positive COVID-19 cases involving my employees?

## Answer:

△ Under OSHA's recordkeeping requirements, COVID-19 is a recordable illness, and employers are responsible for recording cases of COVID-19, if: (1) the case is a confirmed case of COVID-19, as defined by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2) the case is work-related as defined by 29 CFR § 1904.5 and (3) the case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 1904.7.

△ <https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-05-19/revised-enforcement-guidance-recording-cases-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

## Regulatory:

**Question:** Are businesses required to supply masks, Clorox Wipes, etc. to keep their employees safe and what rights do the employees have if the business is not providing measures.

### Answer:

△ Employers have an obligation to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. Employers may choose to ensure that cloth face coverings are worn as a feasible means of abatement in a control plan designed to address hazards from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Employers may choose to use cloth face coverings as a means of source control of transmission risk that cannot be controlled through engineering or administrative controls, including social distancing. There is no standard or regulation for cloth face masks. If an employer requires N95 filtering facepiece respirators as part of the employee's personal protective equipment, a cloth or surgical mask is not sufficient. For sanitation, the employer must furnish a place of employment that is kept clean to the extent that the nature of the work allows. Lavatories must include hand soap or similar cleansing agents and individual hand towels. When employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals the employer must follow the manufacturer's instructions. If an employee has concerns regarding their workplace safety and/or health, they may contact Iowa OSHA at 515-725-5621 or [www.iowaosha.gov](http://www.iowaosha.gov).

△ This link will provide the 10 steps all Workplaces can take to reduce the risk of exposure to Coronavirus:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3994.pdf>

## Miscellaneous Questions:

**Question:** In my community there is a restaurant that is not following the proper COVID-19 protocols for social distancing as designated by the state of Iowa. Who do I contact to report potential violations?

## Answer:

- △ Contact local and/or state law enforcement officials who govern state emergency protocols issued by the Governor for the state of Iowa.
- △ If the establishment not following state protocols holds a liquor license, the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division can be contacted to begin a formal investigation as all licensees must follow all local, state and federal laws including local ordinances and state issued proclamations.
- △ The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals has a complaint form for food businesses and hotels to report compliance issues; <https://dia.iowa.gov/>

## Additional Resources:

- △ State of Iowa: <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/>
- △ Governor's Proclamations for COVID-19; <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/proclamations>
- △ Iowa Department of Public Health:
  - [IDPH pdf](#)
  - <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Business-and-Organizations>
- △ Centers of Disease Control and Prevention: [CDC COVID-19 business response](#)
- △ Occupational Safety and Health Administration: [OSHA publication 3990](#)
  - [OSHA Publication 3994](#)
  - [News release](#)
  - [www.iowaosha.gov](http://www.iowaosha.gov)
- △ Iowa Economic Development Authority: <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/covid-19/>
- △ Department of Human Services: [DHS Childcare](#)
- △ Dental Board: [Iowa Dental Board](#)



Contact  
Information:

For additional COVID-19 guidance or consultation for  
Iowa businesses contact

[covid19business@iowa.gov](mailto:covid19business@iowa.gov)



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