

Safety Meetings are important!

They: get your employees actively involved
 encourage safety awareness
 help identify problems before they become accidents
 motivate employees to follow proper safety procedures

We are happy to provide you with a monthly topic for your agenda.

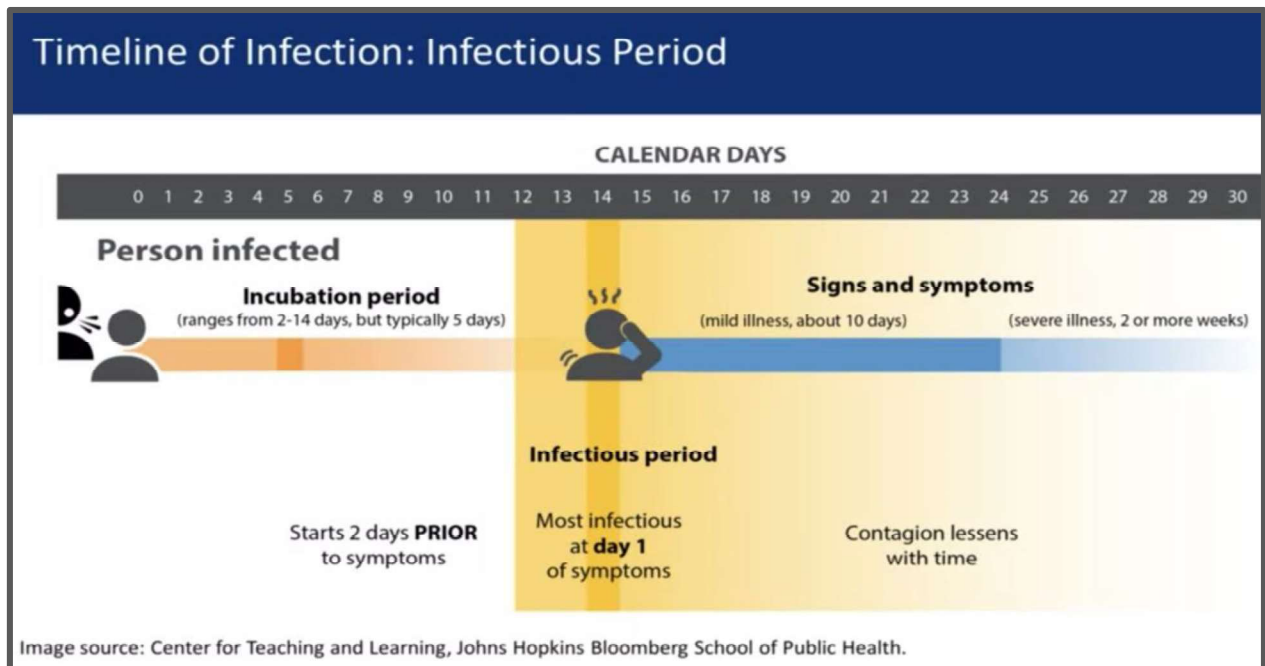
ROUTE TO:

- General Manager
- Safety Coordinator
- Supervisor Dept. _____
- Other _____
- Date of Meeting _____



April 2021

Contact Tracing



COVID-19 contact tracing is a tool used to slow the spread of COVID-19 by identifying and isolating exposed individuals, allowing them to quarantine quickly. Contact tracing is usually conducted by local health departments; however Guidance issued by the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC) states that employers can ask employees whether they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and whether they are experiencing coronavirus symptoms.

Exposure as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) begins when someone is [within 6 feet of the infected person\(s\) for 15 minutes or more](#) (cumulative time). The agency also notes that infected people can spread the virus 48 hours before the onset of symptoms. Travis Vance calls that combination of factors [the "6-15-48 rule"](#).



You will need infected employees to identify others who worked within 6 feet of them, for 15 minutes or more (cumulative), within the 48 hours prior to the sick individual showing symptoms, or later. (Fisher Phillips, North Carolina)

Employers can conduct Contact Tracing and satisfy their exposure-notification obligations by following these steps:

Step 1: Be prepared. Describe the company's contact-tracing process as part of a policy for responding to a case of COVID-19 in the workplace, and make the policy available to all employees, notifying them that if they contract the coronavirus, they will be asked to provide a list of contacts at work. Set up processes to allow for quick identification of contacts. Create a list of standard questions or talking points to use in interviews to learn the movements of the exposed person and to provide guidance for seeking medical help.

Designate a Team. Choose an employee or group of employees who will work closely with public health agencies, interview employees and notify affected contacts.

NOTE: Always Check your State's laws regarding contact tracing to ensure your policy is compliant.

Step 2: Identify and Interview Symptomatic Employees

Prioritize confidentiality. Employers have the right to ask employees if they have symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 without violating the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. But they should never divulge the name of an infected employee to others at the workplace beyond those conducting the investigation.

Interview the symptomatic employee as soon as possible after they are identified. Interviewers should ask for the names of all employees, visitors or vendors they had close contact within the workplace starting from 48 hours before symptoms appeared through the time of the interview

Work with state and local health departments. They are the big guns of contact tracing and have greater legal authority to find people, especially beyond the workplace, said Dr. Clarence Lam, interim director for occupational health services at Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Right now, it's challenging to figure out where an individual got their COVID case from. The risk can be as high in a grocery store as the workplace," he said, noting that public health contact tracers can follow those lines of transmissions.

Step 3: Notify Employees Who May Have Been Exposed

Employees identified in Step 2 are informed they had contact with a person in the workplace who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. To maintain confidentiality, they are not provided with the name of the employee. Contacts are also given guidelines for self-quarantine, told to contact their healthcare provider if they experience COVID-19 symptoms and given the chance to ask questions. (Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America, 2020).



Step 4: Follow up with quarantined employees.

Remember to stay in touch with employees who've been quarantined, and if any of them show symptoms or are diagnosed with COVID-19, begin another contact-tracing exercise to identify those they might have exposed. (Cleeland, 2020).

Forms: Forms do not have to be fancy. The form should record any contacts made two days prior to onset of symptoms (or positive test, whichever is first) through 10 days (min). The form can be created as a paper form using a word document, excel/ or create an online form using a Microsoft product or Google docs/forms then create a link or QR code. Please note that any type of completed form must be kept confidential.

References:

Fisher Phillips. (2020, May 26). *6-15-48: These 3 Numbers Offer A Simple Way*. <https://www.fisherphillips.com/resources-alerts-6-15-48-these-3-numbers-offer>.

Cleeland, N. (2020, June 2). *Contact Tracing for Employers. How to handle investigations and notifications if a worker has COVID-19*. SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/contact-tracing-employers.aspx>.

Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America. (2020, October 3). *COVID-19 Contact Tracing Explained: Roles for Employers and Workers*. <https://www.lhsfna.org/LHSFNA/assets/File/COVID-19%20Contact%20Tracing%2010%2023%2020.pdf>.

CDC (2021, March 12). *When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>.



Training: Fire Safety

Fire safety is important in the home and at work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics every year approximately 3% of all workplace fatalities are due to fires/explosions in the workplace. Practicing evacuation of your facility will help ensure everyone is able to evacuate safely in the event of a fire emergency.

OSHA requires an Emergency Action Plan that includes procedures to report and respond to fire and other emergencies (29CFR1910.38).

OSHA requirements for Fire Emergency :

1. How to report
2. How to respond; including an emergency evacuation route
3. Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate;
4. Procedures to account for all employees after evacuation;
5. Procedures to be followed by employees performing rescue or medical duties; and
6. The name or job title of every employee who may be contacted by employees who need more information about the plan or an explanation of their duties under the plan.
7. Employee alarm system.
8. Training. An employer must designate and train employees to assist in a safe and orderly evacuation of other employees.
9. Review of emergency action plan. An employer must review the emergency action plan with each employee covered by the plan:
 - a. Initial job assignment
 - b. Employees responsibilities change under the plan
 - c. When the plan is changed

[OSHA's etool Fight or Flee](#) can help you decide if you want/ have to train your employees on Fire Extinguisher use.



| Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Option 4 |
|--|--|---|---|
| Total evacuation of employees from the workplace immediately when alarm sounds. No one is authorized to use available portable fire extinguishers. | Designated employees are authorized to use portable fire extinguishers to fight fires. All other employees must evacuate workplace immediately when alarm sounds. | All employees are authorized to use portable fire extinguishers to fight fires. | Extinguishers are provided but not intended for employee use. |
| Requirement | Requirement | Requirement | Requirement |
| Establish an emergency action plan, fire prevention plan and train employees accordingly. Extinguishers are not existing and not required. [29 CFR 1910.157(b)(1)] | Establish an emergency action plan and train employees accordingly. Meet all general fire extinguisher requirements plus annually train designated employees to use fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers in the workplace must be inspected, tested, and maintained. [29 CFR 1910.157(b)(2)] | If <i>any</i> employees will be evacuating, establish an emergency action plan and train employees accordingly. Meet all general fire extinguisher requirements plus annually train all employees to use fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers in the workplace must be inspected, tested, and maintained. [29 CFR 1910.157(b)(2)] | Establish an emergency action plan, fire prevention plan and train employees accordingly. If fire extinguishers are left in the workplace, they must be inspected, tested, and maintained. Extinguishers are provided but not intended for employee use. [29 CFR 1910.157(a)] |

The GAWDA Safety Committee created a Sample Safety Practice for Fire Emergency Preparedness to assist with your company’s Emergency Action Plan. This practice can be found on the GAWDA website/ Member’s only page/ Sample Safety Practices/ Fire Emergency Preparedness.

Consultant’s suggestion: Operationally check all alarm equipment and evacuation maps for accuracy. Practice fire evaluation drills twice annually: once, announced and the second time unannounced. Remember to have everyone sign a record of training and remind them that in a real fire emergency, they will still need to physically sign a paper acknowledging their safe evacuation, prior to leaving the site.

If you have any questions on these topics, or any other DHS, EPA or OSHA topic, please contact me.

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