COVID-19 INFECTION NOTIFICATION
PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYERS

INFORMATION AND SCRIPTS

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The recently adopted Oregon OSHA Temporary COVID-19 rules includes a provision requiring almost all employers to develop a COVID-19 infection notification process. Oregon OSHA rules specifically related to COVID-19 require that you properly notify employees of their exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Due to the surge we are facing, Lane County is currently experiencing a very high volume of cases and follow-up is delayed. This document is meant to be a complementary guide to help your organization/business best prepare for proper notification procedures as a result of a positive COVID case in your workplace.

**Getting Prepared for Contact Notifications**

Notify your employees of the OSHA COVID-19 infection notification procedures ahead of time in order to help reduce anxiety when you do find yourself needing to send out a notification about potential exposure. *(See Example Script #1, Notifying employees of OSHA notification process).*

Depending on the size and structure of your organization/business:

- You may want to authorize a main point of contact (or several) to send out notification notices. You will know best as to how quickly you can pull together information specific to work areas.

- If a notice does need to go out to employees it’s wise to have a central person or team to handle that communication for consistency and documentation purposes.

Temporary Update: As of December 2020, there are so many new people with COVID-19, that Lane County Public Health may not be able to call everyone that is a contact of a COVID positive case. During this extreme risk period, Lane County Public Health is prioritizing contacts. Please see [www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus](http://www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus) for any updates to what the current priority groups are.

**If an employee tells you they have tested positive for COVID-19**

Employees will likely inform you of their positive COVID-19 test and this can be part of your employee educational materials sent out ahead of time. Creating a culture where employees feel they can be honest and transparent about their COVID-19 case is really important in helping to slow the spread. Follow the steps outlined by Oregon OSHA’s temporary rules and
send the positive employee home to start their isolation (See Example Script #2, Talking with an employee that has tested positive). For the latest information about isolation and quarantine dates please see the “After Testing Guidebook” found on the Lane County Website.

Then start the contact notification process by asking the positive employee about their workplace movements while infectious in order to gather information to properly notify other employees in your workplace.

If for some reason you are unable to ask the positive employee about their whereabouts and contact with other employees, you will need to do your best to identify contact information. This can likely be done by inquiring with supervisors or workgroup leads.

**Contact Notification Procedures for Employers**

There is a 24 hour timeline that you need to notify employees in the workplace under OAR 437-001-0744(3)(j), all employers must establish a process to notify affected workers within 24 hours if they have had work-related contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. It is essential that workers are notified as soon as possible so they can proceed with more precautions.

Helpful info for employers:

- Division 1, General Administrative Rules (oregon.gov)
- Fact Sheet: Fact Sheet: Oregon OSHA’s COVID-19 Temporary Rules for All Workplaces

**Step 1:** You must keep information confidential and not reveal any names or personal information as required by the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA).

**Step 2:** You must properly notify other employees of their exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace per OAR 437-001-0744) within 24 hours.

- During a pandemic, employers who are required to comply with the ADA may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms. They must maintain all information about employee illness as a confidential medical record, in compliance with the ADA.

**Step 3:** To the best of your ability, gather names and contact information for employees in the past 2 days* that had close contact with the individual that has tested positive for COVID

- A person’s infectious period starts 2 days prior to either symptoms showing or a positive test for asymptomatic individuals
As of December 2020, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) identifies a close contact as someone who is within 6 feet of distance for a cumulative total of 15 minutes within a 24 hour period, with or without a mask.

**Step 4:** Contact any and all employees that had close contact with the individual that has tested positive for COVID-19.

- If your organization / business is larger and you have designated a contact person or team to send out notices, have that person or team contact any and all employees that had close contact with the individual that has tested positive for COVID-19. (See Example Script #3, Sending notification to affected employees).

**Step 5:** Contact any and all employees within that facility/workgroup area to give a general notification about a positive case in the workplace.

**School Situations**

**IF YOU ARE A SCHOOL, and a STUDENT tests positive, please follow these additional steps:**

**Step 6:** Please contact Kate Blair at kathleen.blair@lanecountyor.gov or by phone at 541-682-4327 or Lisa Chambliss at lisa.chambliss@lanecountyor.gov or 541-682-3930.

**Step 7:** Please ensure you are responding per the latest Ready Schools Safe Learners 2020-21 Guidance (oregon.gov) and have such protocols in place to communicate immediately with staff, families and the school community.

**Step 7:** Please ensure you are responding based on the latest version of the Planning for COVID19 Scenarios in Schools (oregon.gov) Toolkit to address next steps and proper notification protocols.

See Example Scripts #4 & #5 for School Communications to Families. Also, see examples found in Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools (oregon.gov) Toolkit (pages 23-28).

- During a pandemic, employers who are required to comply with the ADA may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms. They must maintain all information about employee illness as a confidential medical record, in compliance with the ADA.

**IF YOU ARE A SCHOOL, and a EMPLOYEE tests positive, please follow these additional steps:**

- Please ensure you are responding per the latest Ready Schools Safe Learners 2020-21 Guidance (oregon.gov) and have such protocols in place to communicate immediately with staff, families and the school community.

- Please ensure you are responding based on the latest version of the Planning for COVID19 Scenarios in Schools (oregon.gov) Toolkit
• See Example Scripts #4 & #5 for School Communications to Families. Also, see examples found in Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools (oregon.gov) Toolkit (pages 23-28).
Example Script #1 (Notifying Employees of OSHA Infection Notification Process):

Hello,

With the rise in cases here in Lane County, we are more likely to see positive cases among our employees. We are getting prepared to take on some additional notification processes in order to be most responsive to the situation as your health and safety is our top priority. Please remember, the more we can urge each other to take preventative measures, the safer our employees are as well as our customers and the community.

If you test positive, it is important to contact your employer and your contacts right away. Please contact __________ (insert contacts appropriate for your organization / business) as soon as you learn you have tested positive.

OSHA Infection Notification Process
Subsection 3(j) of the recently adopted Oregon OSHA Temporary COVID-19 rule includes a provision requiring almost all employers to develop a COVID-19 infection notification process. The process must provide for the notification of exposed employees – those who were within 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more – and of affected employees – those who work in the same facility or in the same well-defined portion of the facility (such as on the same floor or in the same building within larger complex).

Note from Lane County Public Health
Due to the Extreme Risk period we are in, Lane County Public Health (LCPH) is experiencing a large volume of cases and contacts. LCPH is prioritizing contacts that are high risk. LCPH may not be able to call everyone that is a contact of a COVID-19 positive case. If we are informed of a positive COVID-19 case, we will need to gather information as best as we can to determine who had been in close contact with the positive employee during their infectious period and notify appropriate workgroups.

Information will be withheld to protect the privacy of any individual that has tested positive for COVID-19. If you have general questions, please reach out to your personal medical provider or the Lane County COVID-19 Call Center 541-682-1380.

Prevention is Key!
The most important thing that people can do is to follow the guidance provided by public health to protect yourself and others against COVID-19. Please remember that wearing a face covering is one of the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Face coverings reduce the chance that you could unknowingly spread the virus to those around you. Following other recommendations like frequent hand washing, hand sanitizing, regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, maintaining 6’ of physical distance and not touching your face (eyes, nose and mouth) can all help prevent the spread.
More information can be found on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Lane County website and [____________________insert any employer website with COVID information, if applicable]

Take care and stay safe.

Sincerely, __________________________
Example Script #2 (Talking with an employee that has tested positive):

“Thank you for reaching out and letting us know. I’m going to go over a lot of information most of which can also be found in a document called, COVID-19 Guidebook: AFTER TESTING, which can be found at www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus.

Please do not come into work, stay home, even if you don’t have symptoms. Isolate yourself as directed in the Isolation / Quarantine section of the After Testing guidebook.

We are now required to tell employees of their exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Please know that we will keep information confidential and will not reveal your name or personal information as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

It’s really important to call, email, or text close contacts as soon as possible. Timing matters! People are most contagious the day or two before they have symptoms and some people never show symptoms. People usually start to be contagious only 4 days after they get infected. If you can reach your friends and family within four days of their being around you, you can keep the next person from getting sick. The sooner you let your contacts know, the sooner they can take action to stop the spread. The After Testing guidebook has some great tips on what to say and how to tell your contacts.

Have you identified any fellow employees who would qualify as a close contact? [If not, please go through the positive employee’s infectious workdays and note anyone who is identified as a close contact]. Thank you for your help identifying workplace close contacts. We will reach out to those employees to inform them that they are close contacts and start their quarantining process.

Here is some general information you can tell your personal close contacts:
Please stay home, away from others, and get tested. They can talk to their doctors about getting a test or look on our website out community test sites. If they don’t have a doctor or have clarifying questions, they can call our Non-Emergency Call Center at 541-682-1380. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If they test positive, they should tell anyone they’ve been in close contact with. No matter the test result, your close contacts should quarantine at home for 14 days since you were last together.

Here is some sick leave options available to you [mention those that apply to your COVID-19 affected employees]:

  • Paid sick time - Oregon law gives all employees sick time, including part-time workers.
  • Families First Coronavirus Response Act – Requires covered employers to provide medical leave for specific reasons related to COVID-19, and emergency paid sick leave or expanded family leave.
• Pandemic Unemployment Assistance – Provides financial assistance if you’re unable to work due to COVID-19 and don’t qualify for regular unemployment (self-employed, contractor, gig worker, new hire, etc.).

• COVID-19 Temporary Paid Leave Program - Temporary paid leave for people who need to quarantine or isolate because of COVID-19 exposure or are experiencing symptoms and need a medical diagnosis, but do not qualify for COVID-19-related paid sick leave (or do not have access to COVID-19-related paid time off).

Please only come back to work when you feel healthy again, and meet the requirements to be around others. Please refer to the After Testing guidebook for information about when to start and end your isolation.

I know I’ve gone over a lot of information. I just want to again, thank you for letting me know. Please take care and know that you can reach out to the Public Health Call Center for any assistance you might need while in isolation. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you for your time. Please take care.
Example Script #3 (Sending out Notification to Affected Employees):

Hello,

Your health and well-being continues to be one of our greatest priorities. I’m writing to notify you that ______________ (insert organization name) has been made aware of a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace and the possibility that you may fall under one of the definitions below.

1. You are considered an "affected employee" meaning you have been present in the facility with a confirmed COVID-19 case. "Affected employees" are those who worked in the same facility or in the same well-defined portion of the facility, such as a particular floor, where the COVID-19 confirmed individual was present. You are not considered a close contact and do not have to quarantine. You have a very low probability of contracting COVID-19 from this exposure event.

2. You are considered an "exposed employee" meaning you have had a workplace contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. "Exposed employees" are those who were within six feet of a confirmed COVID-19 individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more, regardless of whether one or both of them were wearing masks, face coverings, or other protective equipment. You must quarantine.

You have been identified as an __________[affected or exposed] employee. OR If you are an exposed employee, we will be contacting you directly within the next 24 hours to start your quarantining process.

Due to privacy protections under HIPAA the individual who was the source of the exposure will NOT be identified.

We understand that this information and our inability to share details may be concerning. This email does not mean you have COVID-19, but that you may have been affected or exposed. We want to remind you we have implemented several workplace safety precautions and when you wear a mask, wash your hands and keep at least 6 feet distance between yourself and others, you are lowering the likelihood of exposure.

We are asking that you continue to follow the proper precautions under the CDC guidelines:

• Stay home if you are ill or not feeling well.
• If you have concerns about your possibility of exposure and possible protection for your family you can contact the COVID Call Center (541) 682-1380 or your medical provider.
• Contact Human Resources to see what leave options are available to you if you are directed to quarantine.
• Contact your healthcare provider if you are feeling ill or you experience symptoms of COVID-19 illness for potential testing.

• Follow all recommendations and precautions from Lane County Public Health.

• Lane County Public Health is currently experiencing a very high volume of cases and follow-up is delayed. If you have had a positive COVID test, please isolate, tell your employer, and let your contacts know. Lane County Public Health will contact you as soon as they can. If you have been told you are a contact, please quarantine. Lane County Public Health will contact only high risk and household contacts. For more information, please see Lane County’s COVID-19 Guidebook: AFTER TESTING, which includes information about isolation and quarantine. If you need assistance to isolate or quarantine, help is available.

*__________________(insert organization name), as always, will protect all employee medical information and will disclose it only to the degree such disclosure is strictly necessary.

For more information on COVID-19, including symptoms of which you may want to be aware, please visit the Oregon Health Authority COVID-19 website (https://govstatus.egov.com/OROHA-COVID-19) or the US Centers for Disease & Prevention COVID-19 website (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html).

You are receiving this email in accordance with Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Oregon OSHA) rules specifically related to COVID-19 (OAR 437-001-0744).

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Take care and stay safe.

Sincerely,

___________________
Example Script #4 (School Communication to Families):

Dear _____________,

The Lane County Public Health (LCPH) officials have worked closely with school officials to review cohort logs to identify individuals who may have been exposed to a person who tested positive for COVID-19. It has been determined that your child may have had direct exposure to a person with a confirmed positive COVID-19 case on [insert dates__________].

In consultation with LCPH, we are immediately closing the ___________ cohort. They will remain at home for 14 days since their exposure. They will be able to end their quarantine on [__________] if they do not have symptoms at that time.

LCPH may reach out to you in the near future to conduct contact tracing, answer questions, and do a symptom screening.

It is important to notify us if any household members become ill with COVID-19. Additional protocols will be followed to ensure a safe return to school.

We know this is a hard time for everyone and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We will remain in contact with you to update the status of the school. If you have school-related questions, please contact _________________. You can also reach out to LCPH for any questions about quarantine or COVID-19. Their number is 541-682-1380.

Sincerely,
_____________________
Example Script #5 (School Communication to Families):

Dear ____________,

Today we received word that an individual in our community tested positive for COVID-19.

We have communicated extensively with Lane County Public Health (LCPH) about this situation, and based on the timeline of exposure it is their recommendation that we quarantine the cohort and staff that were exposed. This has already been communicated to those involved and all protocols are being followed.

While we understand the desire for detailed information, please understand that what we can and can’t report as far as details, falls under both HIPPA, ADA and our guidance from LCPH. We ask that if you have questions regarding a specific incident, or reporting in general, please contact [______________]. We respectfully request that you do not text, email or otherwise contact our teachers with questions that concern health-related information.

The health and wellbeing are school community is our top priority. We know this is a hard time for everyone and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We will remain in contact with you to update the status of the school(s). Please check our school district webpage for updated information.

Sincerely,

__________________________