



Municipality of Anchorage

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

Anchorage Health Department

August 19, 2020

Recommendations on business-related COVID-19 exposures

With COVID-19 spreading widely in Anchorage, many local businesses are dealing with COVID-19 and how to best protect workers from the virus.

All employees should be notified of possible exposure in the workplace, while maintaining the confidentiality of the person with the infection.

It's important that employees know the basics of COVID-19, its [symptoms](#), its [transmission](#), [how to prevent infection](#), and [what to do if they are sick](#). A helpful handout is the CDC's [What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others](#).

- COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that can produce a variety of symptoms, for example, fever (over 100 F) or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pressure or tightness, fatigue, muscle or body aches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.
- COVID-19 spreads very easily among people in face-to-face contact, through tiny respiratory droplets produced when a person with the infection coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings.
- The incubation period for COVID-19, which is the time between exposure to the virus (becoming infected) and getting sick, is on average 5-6 days; it can be up to 14 days. During this period, some infected persons can be contagious to others even before they develop symptoms.
- People can be infectious to others for two days BEFORE and 10 days AFTER you get sick. You can spread COVID-19 even before you feel any symptoms. Some people with COVID-19 never have symptoms but may still be infectious to others. For more detailed instructions, see CDC's [What To Do If You Are Sick](#).

An employee with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days after onset of illness or a positive test and until cleared by public health to return to work and other activities.

Employees who have fever or other symptoms should stay home, or go home, and get tested as soon as possible. Information on testing in Anchorage and the rest of Alaska is available [here](#). Please self-isolate at home while awaiting your test results. Do not go to work or public places. If you have a negative test, you can return to work after your symptoms have resolved.

People with possible COVID-19 exposure should try to stay away from people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 during the 14 days after possible exposure. While many people experience mild illness with COVID-19, many people in Anchorage have conditions that put them at increased risk for severe illness and possible death.

Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace, and beyond

All employees should practice safe distancing at all times and should wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose at all times in the workplace, while working AND while on breaks, and in other indoor locations outside the home.

Keeping a safe distance – at least 6 feet – away from other people is the best way to prevent infection.

Everyone should wear a cloth face covering that covers the mouth and nose at all times in indoor settings, and also in outdoor settings where it is difficult to maintain safe physical separation at all times. Face coverings are not recommended for children under 2 years.

Frequent handwashing is one of the best ways to protect against getting sick. Use hand sanitizer when you can't use soap and water.

CDC Recommendations for COVID-19 in the Workplace

CDC has several helpful guidance documents and web pages for businesses dealing with COVID-19 in the workplace. Here are some of them:

- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)
- [Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure](#)
- [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [Businesses and Workplaces -- Plan, Prepare, and Respond](#)
- [Prepare your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of COVID-19](#)

Most workplaces should follow the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#) and instruct employees who have had close contact to a person with COVID-19 while the person was infectious to stay home for 14 days, telework if possible, and self-monitor

for [symptoms](#). A close contact is a person who spends 15 minutes or more within 6 feet of an infected person.

Critical infrastructure workplaces should follow the guidance [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Employees Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#).

In most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility. But do close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Please help our public health nursing team by keeping a contact log, noting the days and times of the places visited and the people with whom you had contact. The contact log helps with contact tracing in the event you become sick with COVID-19.

With COVID-19 spreading rapidly in Anchorage, safe prevention practices are essential for protecting your employees and our community. Should you have questions or concerns, the health department is here and happy to be of help.

For more information, call 2-1-1 or visit www.muni.org/COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce Chandler".

Bruce Chandler, MD, MPH
Medical Officer
Anchorage Health Department