

# CHECKLIST | RESPONDING TO A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has challenged employers to plan for how they would respond to a positive test in their workplace. Employers are responsible for handling the situation swiftly to protect the health of other employees while preserving the affected employee's confidentiality. In addition to notifying the company and its customers, employers must also disinfect the office and evaluate next steps. If you're in this situation, you may be wondering what you need to do. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides guidelines for how employers can respond, and this checklist provides an outline of steps for employers to consider.

## EMPLOYER PREPAREDNESS PLAN

	YES	NO	N/A
Does your organization have COVID-19 testing practices in place that comply with all applicable federal and local guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your organization have a planned response in place in the event of an employee testing positive for COVID-19?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, has a planned response been communicated to employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## ADDRESSING THE EMPLOYEE WHO TESTED POSITIVE

Calmly and empathetically address the employee to discuss next steps and assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure the employee that their identity will remain confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question the employee about with whom they have been in contact within the last 14 days.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine if the employee has been in the workplace within the last seven days.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure the employee goes into isolation, and help them coordinate taking leave or paid time off until they've recovered.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refer the employee to local health resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## COMMUNICATIONS

Contact trace for any employees who had close contact with the infected employee. Follow CDC guidelines for close contact: *a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.* [CDC GUIDELINES](#)

Make determinations on any employees who should begin self-isolation for 14 days. Communicate steps for self-isolation, including taking leave, paid time off or remote work arrangements. If your business is considered essential, contacted employees may continue to work. Establish a testing protocol suited for your situation.

Notify the rest of the company by email or letter that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. Keep employee's identity confidential.

Notify employees on next steps, including details for a partial or full closing of the workplace for disinfecting.

If planning on having any or all employees work from home or closing the office, disclose this information in the communication.

## CLOSE DOWN THE WORKPLACE

Determine whether the workplace will be partially or fully closing for disinfecting.

If feasible, allow eligible employees to work from home during this time.

Ensure all temporary closing information is communicated to employees, including whom this affects, remote work expectations, paid time off, leave and expected timelines for reopening the workplace.

Review provisions included in the newly instituted federal leave act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), should you need to close the office or if employees opt to take leave due to COVID-19. Certain employers are required to provide employees with expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 through Dec. 31, 2020.

Create plans for only cleaning staff to be in infected areas for 72 hours during the disinfecting period.

## PREPARING FOR DISINFECTING

If the employee has been in the workplace within the last seven days, begin preparations for disinfecting the workplace.

Ensure necessary cleaning supplies are stocked, including soap and disinfectants listed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Ensure personal protective equipment is stocked for cleaning teams, including gloves, gowns and face coverings.

Evacuate planned areas for disinfecting for at least 72 hours.

## DISINFECTING THE WORKPLACE

Close off all areas visited by the person, open windows and use ventilating fans with airflow. After opening up the airflow, wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning.

After 24 hours, cleaning staff should begin disinfecting all areas and equipment used by the person.

Ensure cleaning staff is using personal protective equipment, including gloves, gowns and face coverings.

Begin by cleaning all hard surfaces with soap and water.

Apply a disinfectant to all surfaces. The EPA lists appropriate disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Clean soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs and drapes. For soft surfaces, best cleaning practices are similar to those of hard surfaces. However, you can clean by laundering if possible. If not an option, continue to clean with a disinfectant.

## DISINFECTING THE WORKPLACE (CONTINUED)

Clean electronic devices, according to manufacturers' instructions, or with alcohol-based cleaning solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

Clean soft laundry items, such as towels, linens and work-related clothing using manufacturers' instructions, using the warmest possible water setting.

When employees return after 72 hours, resume routine cleaning routines.

## LEGAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Report the positive test result to the local department of health, if required. Be prepared to provide a response plan (with the employee's permission first).

Prepare a statement to respond to any media that contacts you. If you have reported to the department of health, report that you are working with the department of health and following recommendations.

Use this checklist as a guide when planning how to respond to an employee testing positive for COVID-19. For any items you are unable to check, consider if any updates to your organization's response could help protect the health and safety of employees and guests. By preparing in advance, employers can swiftly respond to the employee, effectively notify the rest of their organization and make plans for moving forward. Harden is here to help during these uncertain times. Contact us today for additional COVID-19 resources and guidance for how your company can respond to it.



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