MITIGATING COVID-19 FOR IOWA BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Frequently asked questions with answers to assist Iowan’s with virus containment
Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020

Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

Summary of Changes to the Guidance:

Below are changes as of May 6, 2020

- Updated strategies and recommendations for employers responding to COVID-19, including those seeking to resume normal or phased business operations:
  - Conducting daily health checks
  - Conducting a hazard assessment of the workplace
  - Encouraging employees to wear cloth face coverings in the workplace, if appropriate
  - Implementing policies and practices for social distancing

CDC Industry Guidance

- Resources for Airlines
- Resources for the Ship Industry
- Employers with Workers at High Risk

OSHA/HHS Guidance

- Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
Preparedness:

**Question:** What can we do to mitigate potential COVID-19 exposure in our 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
- 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)
Question: Who should be tested for COVID-19?

Answer:

Δ Any Iowan can be tested for current infection with COVID-19 through Test Iowa [www.testiowa.com](http://www.testiowa.com)

Δ Serology testing can determine whether a person was likely previously infected with COVID-19 for additional information about testing visit: [https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/COVID%2019%20Testing%20Framework%2005_27_20.pdf](https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/COVID%2019%20Testing%20Framework%2005_27_20.pdf)
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”).
**Testing:**

**Question:** How do I interpret my COVID-19 test results?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULT</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED ACTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIRAL TESTING:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Most Likely you do currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give</td>
<td>Stay home* and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you are sick.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the virus to others.</td>
<td>*If you are a healthcare or critical infrastructure worker, notify your work of</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>your test result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Most Likely you do NOT currently have an active COVID-19 infection.</td>
<td>If you have symptoms, you should keep monitoring symptoms and seek medical</td>
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<td>advice about staying home and if you need to get tested again.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>*If you don’t have symptoms, you should get tested again only if your medical</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>provider and/or workplace tells you to. Take steps to protect yourself and others.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ANTIBODY TESTING:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive:</td>
<td>You Likely have HAD a COVID-19 infection.</td>
<td>You may be protected from re-infection (have immunity), but this cannot be said</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>with certainty. Scientists are conducting studies now to provide more</td>
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<td>information. Take steps to protect yourself and others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>You Likely NEVER HAD (or have not yet developed antibodies to) COVID-19</td>
<td>You could still get COVID-19. Take steps to protect yourself and others.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Both</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral Positive,</td>
<td>Most Likely you do currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give</td>
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<td>Viral Negative,</td>
<td>You Likely have HAD and RECOVERED FROM a COVID-19 infection.</td>
<td>You may be protected from re-infection (have immunity), but this cannot be said</td>
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*The test is very perfect. All tests occasionally result in false positive results (the test result should be negative because you DO NOT have COVID-19) or false negative results (the test result should be positive because you DO have COVID-19). Sometimes the results are not definitive (the result is unclear, and you don’t know if it’s positive or negative). For this and other reasons, results should always be reviewed by a healthcare professional.

*Viral testing typically involves collection of respiratory specimens such as nasal swabs or throat swabs. They test for the presence of the virus, usually by testing for the virus’s RNA or sometimes by testing for the virus’s antibody (“antigen testing”). Antigen testing may be less sensitive than tests for the virus’s RNA. If your antigen test is negative, please ask your healthcare provider for additional testing on an nasal test is needed and how long you should stay home.

Antibody testing, also called "serology testing" or "serology," is typically performed on a blood sample. Ideally, the results show whether you have been infected with the virus in the past or may be currently infected. Antibody tests check for antibodies that appear in the blood between about one and three weeks after symptoms onset and may remain as long as a lifetime. Antibody tests may be positive while a person is infected. It's not yet known whether these antibodies protect against reinfection with the COVID-19 virus. For many other viral infections, antibodies are protective for years or longer, but we do not yet have adequate data to know for COVID-19.

*Stay home* and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you are sick.
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 disinfectant external icon. 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.

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 with 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-isolate for 14 days after his last day of contact. If the spouse is well and has tested negative there is not a need for him to self-isolate at this point.
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? Is it the start date when the test was first completed, or when the positive result was emailed?

**Answer:**

Δ The start date is the day of the test (not the day that results were released).
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-isolate for 14 days after returning home from travel outside of Iowa and within the United States (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.
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to recommend that person is returning from international travel self-quarantine for 14 days after they return.
  - Do not travel if you are sick.
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.

April 10, 2020 Recordkeeping Memorandum
Question: What will the employer need to do when providing N95 masks to employees? Is OSHA waving the regulations?

Answer:

All employers whose employees are required to use or are permitted voluntary use of respiratory protection must continue to manage their respiratory protection programs (RPPs) in accordance with the OSHA respirator standard, and should pay close attention to shortages of N95s during the COVID-19 pandemic (additional information www.iowaosha.gov)

OSHA 4015 respirator poster
Regulatory:

**Question:** Do I have to reopen if my work environment will not meet CDC guidelines with the six feet of social distancing?

**Answer:**

△ An employer is not required to reopen. If the employer cannot meet the recommended guidelines per CDC, Iowa Department of Public Health, Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency, or OSHA COVID-19 guidance, such as social distancing, it would be ill advised to reopen.

△ [Proclamation of Disaster Emergency](#)
Question: What constitutes a workplace shutdown?

Answer:

There are no requirements at this time for a business shutdown following positive COVID-19 test results. That would be left up to the employer to determine if a shutdown is warranted.
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, such as because 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 employees 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.

- 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
Mass Gatherings:

Question: What are the guidelines for youth sporting events?

Answer:

The gathering organizer must ensure social distancing, which is defined as at least six feet of physical distance between each group or individual attending alone. Practices, games, and competitions for baseball, softball, and individual sports, such as running, bicycling, swimming, tennis, and golf, are not prohibited, even where athletes may have some contact within six feet, provided that the organizer of such activities and events implements reasonable measures under the circumstances of each gathering to ensure reasonable social distancing, increased hygiene practices, and other public health measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 consistent with guidance issued by the Iowa Department of Public Health. Please refer to the Governor’s Public Health proclamation of June 10, 2020 for additional information: https://governor.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Public%20Health%20Proclamation%20-%20202006.10.pdf
Mass Gatherings:

**Question:** Can we hold our annual festival – including indoor and outdoor activities?

**Answer:**

△ Yes, a festival may be held as long as it complies with all relevant provisions in the Governor’s Public Health proclamation of June 10, 2020. In particular, the gathering organizer must ensure social distancing, which is defined as at least six feet of physical distance between each group or individual attending alone social distancing. Additionally, the gathering organizer shall also implement reasonable measures for increased hygiene practices, and other public health measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 consistent with guidance issued by the Iowa Department of Public Health and, for any food service, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. Please refer to the Governor’s Public Health proclamation of June 10, 2020 for additional information: [https://governor.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Public%20Health%20Proclamation%20-%2020200610.pdf](https://governor.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Public%20Health%20Proclamation%20-%2020200610.pdf)
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 call to report violations?

Answer:
△ Local police, county sheriff or state patrol enforces state of emergency protocols for the state.
Additional Resources

Δ State of Iowa: [https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/)

Δ Iowa Department of Public Health: [IDPH procedures](https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Business-and-Organizations)
- [IDPH pdf](https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Business-and-Organizations)


Δ Occupational Safety and Health Administration: [OSHA publication 3990](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-3990.html)
- [OSHA Publication 3994](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-3994.html)
- [News release](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-3994.html)
- [News release](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA-3994.html)
- [www.iowaosha.gov](http://www.iowaosha.gov)

Δ Iowa Economic Development Authority; [https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/covid-19/](https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/covid-19/)

Δ Department of Human Services; [DHS Childcare](https://www.idph.state.ia.us/)

Δ Dental Board; [Iowa Dental Board](https://www.ido.state.ia.us/)
For additional COVID-19 guidance or consultation for Iowa businesses contact

covid19business@iowa.gov