

## **What actions can you expect from the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) if there is a confirmation of COVID-19 at your facility?**

The purpose of this document is to provide information on what you might expect if there is a confirmation of COVID-19 at your facility. This is based on information from the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) and CDC recommendations. This guidance is provided from ODAFF and OSDH to help you prepare for the possibility of an employee at your facility testing positive for COVID-19, and to help you understand the actions that OSDH recommends you take. This is a rapidly evolving situation. These recommendations will be updated as new information becomes available.

## **Who will notify you that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19?**

The notification will come directly from the employee or a phone call from OSDH staff assigned to follow the employee's case.

After a case is confirmed by a laboratory results, OSDH interviews the individual to determine the infectious period, contacts, locations they may have been while ill, and occupation in order to identify any high risk settings that need additional follow up.

Typically, the OSDH county nurse assigned to the case requests the patient notify their employer directly in order to allow for maximum communication between OSDH and the employer without violation of HIPAA. Otherwise, the notification will come from OSDH staff as they work with the facility to make appropriate recommendations. The process will be very similar to follow up on cases of Salmonellosis or other pathogens in workers in processing plants.

It is advisable that you prepare for this first notification by identifying people in your company who should be on that initial call—human resources, upper management, internal health care staff for example. It is also important to involve someone who is deeply familiar with production and staffing at your facility. This person should be able to identify where the confirmed employee worked and the type of exposure this person might have had with other employees.

## **What happens if there is a positive in your workforce?**

OSDH will proceed with finding out details about dates worked, contact with others, breaches in processes, etc. Their role is to ensure that the case is immediately excluded from high risk setting and will remain so for the appropriate amount of time (until they are cleared by OSDH). OSDH then instructs facilities to implement needed measures on their end.

Detailed guidance from OSDH for those that may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

FDA has information linked [here](#). The March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup> entries address processing facilities specifically.

## **What can facilities do to be prepared and lessen the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19?**

We know that facilities have been taking extraordinary steps to reduce the risk since the situation began. Employee screening; sending employees with symptoms home to seek medical

attention; additional hand washing/sanitizing stations that are monitored; increased sanitation frequency in common areas are some examples.

Additionally, facilities should actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

Other options include emphasizing respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees. Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

We also advise facilities to perform routine environmental cleaning. This includes cleaning all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

More information on preparation can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

**Summary** – To implement how to best decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in your facility, we recommend that you prepare the team that will interact with OSDH should you receive a call confirming that you have an employee that has contracted COVID-19. Be prepared to identify the high-risk contacts that any employee in your facility would have had prior to the confirmation so that you can respond quickly.

Implement mitigation strategies that reduce the number of additional employees that might be identified as having high risk contact with an employee that is confirmed positive, and review the extensive mitigation steps that you already have in place with a focus on minimizing prolonged close contact among employees as much as possible.

More information:

CDC cleaning recommendations

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Business Resources at CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

OSDH COVID-19 Website

<https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/>