What to do when an employee tests positive for COVID-19

- **Send the employee home immediately** to self-isolate if they have come to work.

- **Tell the employee to stay home and self-isolate** if they inform you of their status from home. To self-isolate is to stay at home and physically apart from others to avoid spreading COVID-19.

- **Ask the employee to call VDH (540-267-8240) and contact Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Case Management at reportacase@vt.edu to report their situation, and to also contact their health care provider** if they have concerning symptoms.

- **If the employee is unable/fails to notify the EHS Case Management Team in a timely manner, promptly email reportacase@vt.edu. Include the employee’s contact information, work location, supervisor information, and dates the employee last worked.**

- **Tell the employee they are required to inform you of their beginning and end-of-isolation dates.** The Case Management Team can recommend dates. VDH or the employee’s health care provider must confirm dates. The isolation minimum is 10 days. The return-to-work date may be extended due to positive results of additional testing, or prolonged illness.

- **Tell the employee they cannot return to work until the day that follows their last isolation day. To return to work, they must also be symptom-free or have improving symptoms, AND fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (aspirin, Advil, Tylenol).**

- **Notify your department’s HR team** of the employee’s situation promptly. Ask the employee to
communicate with HR to review leave benefits.

What to do when an employee has been in contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 case, and may need to/i told to quarantine

- **Close contact** means being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a person with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour time period, OR having direct contact with infectious COVID-19 secretions (e.g., being coughed on). If the employee is a close contact, they will have to quarantine.

- An employee may or may not be sure if they are a close contact. In either case, **the employee should contact VDH at 540-267-8240 for guidance** and to set quarantine dates if needed. Employees should also confirm their status by contacting EHS Case Management at reportacase@vt.edu.

- **The CDC recommends that close contacts quarantine for 14 days.** However, quarantine may end after day 10 if the employee has had no symptoms of COVID-19 during quarantine. In some cases, an employee may be able to end quarantine and return to work after day 7, **ONLY IF** 1) They have had no symptoms of COVID-19 during quarantine; 2) They schedule a PCR test to occur days 5 – 7 (or later) of quarantine; and 3) they receive a negative test result.

- **Tell the close contact employee that they are required to inform you of their beginning and end-of-quarantine dates,** once they learn when these are. Advise the employee to contact HR to review leave benefits.

- Ensure that the close contact employee understands that **they are required to quarantine at home (stay physically apart from others) and not come to work,** and to self-monitor for COVID symptoms (fever, cough, loss of taste/smell, aches, GI distress, etc.) for 14 days from start of quarantine. The employee can return to work on **the day that follows** their last quarantine day if they are symptom-free.

- **If symptoms occur during quarantine, the employee should,** 1) Self-isolate for 10 days; 2) Seek advice by contacting their health care provider or VDH; and 3) Report their status to
the EHS Case Management Team at reportacase@vt.edu, and to you, their supervisor.

What to do when an employee experiences possible COVID-19 symptoms, but has had no known contact with a positive case (they may have been tested and are awaiting results, or may not have been tested)

- **Send the employee home** if symptoms develop at work.

- **Tell the employee to stay home if they call in** to report having symptoms.

- If the employee has not been tested, **advise them to contact their health care provider or VDH (540-267-8240) for guidance.** Testing may be recommended and scheduled.

- If the employee has already been tested and is awaiting results, **tell them to stay home and quarantine (stay apart from others) until test results are known.**

- **Ask the employee to update you on their status and test results.**

- If the employee tests negative and symptoms are improving and determined to be non-COVID and non-infectious (i.e. allergies), the employee can return to work. If infectious (flu, cold, etc.), it is safest for the employee to stay home until they feel better and have improved symptoms.

- If the employee tests positive, follow the guidance above for positive employee cases.

What to do when an employee worked in shared areas/used shared equipment with a COVID-19 case, but was not in close contact with the case

- The employee can continue to report to work, and should self-monitor for symptoms.

- Ensure that preventive measures are taken in shared spaces:
Follow cleaning/disinfecting procedures and schedules for shared equipment and common or high-touch surfaces.

Encourage compliance with mask-wearing and physical distancing among employees.

Encourage handwashing for 20 seconds on a regular basis (or use of hand sanitizer) and avoid contact with face, eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

What to do when an employee has been around a person who is a close contact with a COVID-19 case (the employee is a contact of a close contact individual)

- **Advise the employee** to 1) Evaluate whether they were in actual close contact with that individual, exactly when and for how long; 2) Stay informed about that individual's status (has the individual developed COVID-19 or tested positive within 10 days of their contact with positive case?); and 3) Stay physically removed from that individual during quarantine. **No notifications or other actions are needed at this time.**

- **While waiting to see what happens during that individual’s quarantine, the employee can report to work**, giving top priority to physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and regular handwashing.

- **If the individual develops COVID-19 and/or tests positive**, the employee needs to report their situation to VDH (540-267-8240) or EHS Case Management (reportacase@vt.edu). The employee must quarantine if it is confirmed that they were a close contact to the COVID-19 case, and follow quarantine guidance provided above.

What to do when employees work in a building where there has been a COVID-19 case, but they have had no contact with the case

- Employees are at no higher risk of exposure to the virus in this situation than when visiting other public spaces in the community (e.g., grocery stores).

- Exposure risk can be reduced by practicing physical distancing, avoiding large groups, wearing face coverings, regular handwashing, and cleaning/disinfection of high-touch surfaces.