



Arizona Restaurant Association

Employee Positive COVID-19 Test Guidance

The guidelines below are focused on slowing the spread of the virus and protecting our staff and customers in the event one of our employees tests positive for COVID-19. As our State continues the process of reopening and more people begin to feel comfortable patronizing restaurants, there is increased opportunity for the exposure to the virus. It is more important than ever that restaurants continue to diligently follow the re-opening guidance with emphasis placed on employee cloth masks.

An employee testing positive for COVID-19 is of serious concern to any restaurant because of the increased likelihood of exposure. The ARA encourages all restaurants, including those without any positive cases, to review and implement the recommendations in the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#).

What action should I take if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19?

Follow CDC Guidance on cleaning and disinfection for all areas used by the sick employee.

- Close off areas used by the sick employee.
- Wait 24-hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed – If waiting 24-hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible and ensure all employees assigned to clean the area are provided appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Note: The 24-hour waiting period is to allow for airborne viruses in the area to settle onto a surface. Prior to 24-hours there is a risk that personnel sent into the area could still contract the virus from an airborne source.

Note: If possible, restaurants should consider the use of a third-party cleaning service offering COVID-19 remediation services.

- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.
- If it has been 7 days or more since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary but you should continue to routinely clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces.
- If it has not been 7 days, perform an additional deep cleaning and disinfection of the areas.
 - Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting them.
 - To disinfect surfaces, use products that meet [EPA criteria for use against the Coronavirus](#) and are appropriate for the surface type.
 - Always wear gloves and gowns appropriate for the surface.

- Employees may need to wear additional PPE depending on the setting and disinfectant product you are using – for each product you use, consult and follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use.

Due to the nature of restaurant operations and the high mobility of employees, it is unlikely a restaurant would be able to isolate areas of the restaurant where the sick employee was working without impacting the operations of the entire restaurant. For this reason, the ARA recommends that restaurants close to patrons during the 24-hour waiting period and cleaning and disinfection period.

How should I handle employees who may have been exposed to COVID-19?

The CDC has two separate set of recommendations. One is the traditional guidance for business operations and the second set of recommendations for critical infrastructure workers.

Under the traditional guidance, the CDC recommends businesses:

- Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus.
- Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).
- Follow the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#) and instruct potentially exposed employees to stay home for 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms.
- In all cases, employees continuing to work should go through a pre-work health screening, including a temperature check, and be required to wear masks in compliance with Executive Order 2020-40.

Restaurants may also rely on the second set of recommendations from the CDC for critical infrastructure employees. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Agency (CISA) has identified restaurant operations as critical in their [Advisory Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response](#) dated May 19, 2020. While restaurant operations are listed in this memorandum, the agency also states that the “...list of identified essential critical infrastructure workers is intended to overly inclusive...” additionally, the memorandum states that critical infrastructure employers have an obligation to limit, to the extent possible, the reintegration of any person who have experienced an exposure to COVID-19 but remain asymptomatic in ways that best protect the health of the worker, their co-workers, and the general public. For this reason, the ARA cautions against restaurants relying on the CDC’s guidance for critical infrastructure employees. Nevertheless, a situation may arise which will require the adoption of this guidance over the traditional CDC guidance.

For critical infrastructure employees, the CDC states that workers may be permitted to continue to work following a potential exposure to COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. Employees who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

- Undergo a wellness check: Employers should measure the employee’s temperature and assess symptoms prior to starting work. Temperature checks should happen prior to an individual entering the facility.
- Continuously monitor for symptoms: As long as the employee does not have a temperature or exhibit any symptoms, the employee should self-monitor throughout their shift.

- Wear a mask: The employee should always wear a face mask while in the workplace for.
- Social Distance: The Employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit.
- Disinfect and clean workspaces: Employers should ensure that all areas of employee contact are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.

If the employee becomes sick during their shift, they should immediately be sent home and instructed to follow the CDC's guidance for ending self-isolation. Surfaces in their workplace should be cleaned and disinfected and information on persons who had contact with the sick employee during the time the employee had symptoms and for 2-days prior to symptoms should be compiled.

Should I notify the public if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19?

While it is not required to make a public statement or contact non-employee vendors or customers, a restaurant should consider getting in front of the issue by making a statement on their website or social media of the situation outline the steps they have put in place to clean and disinfect their establishment and monitor employees.

When should I allow an employee who tested positive for COVID-19 or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 to return to work?

Employers should instruct employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 or believe they have COVID-19 to follow the [CDC's recommendations for ending home isolation](#). In general, individuals who exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 (with or without a positive test result) may return to work after:

- 3 days with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication), and
- Symptoms have improved, and
- 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

If any employee will be tested they may return to work when they have no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication), symptoms have improved, and have received two negative test results in a row, taken at least 24 hours apart.

If an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, the employee may return to work after 10 days have passed since the test, provided they do not develop symptoms. An employee that tested positive for COVID-19 but is not experiencing any symptoms may return to work if they received two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart, and they do not develop any symptoms. If an employee does develop symptoms after a positive test, they should be instructed to follow the recommendations above.

Employee management during and after a closure

During the closure of a restaurant for the 24-hour waiting period and the disinfection period, restaurants should be cognizant of their responsibilities under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#), and [Arizona's Earned Paid Sick Time \(EPST\)](#). Additionally, employers should be aware of their responsibility under the FFCRA and EPST for employees that are required to self-isolate because of potential exposure to the Coronavirus.

- Employees that have been notified that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and to self-isolate for 14-days or to seek testing need to be compensated under the FFCRA for up to 2-weeks (or 80 hours)
- If an employee has already used their 2-weeks of paid time under the FFCRA but still have EPST hours left, an employer must allow the employee to use their EPST hours during their self-isolation

Resources

Testing resources:

The [Arizona Department of Health Services](#) maintains a list of testing sites conducting public tests. The vast majority of these testing sites require pre-registration, so it suggested that employees check with multiple sites to see which one has an appointment available the soonest.

Additionally, private laboratories (such as LabCorp and Sonora Quest) have contract services for employers to do on-site or off-site testing. Depending on your size, checking with these companies and setting up a contingency plan to do mass testing quickly may be worth the extra expenditure.

The ARA's Healthcare Partner, United Healthcare has released an at-home test for Coronavirus that ARA members can order at a discount. These tests usually provide results within 24 hours of the lab receiving the test.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

ARA partner ECOLAB has developed a [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Public Spaces, Hospitality, Foodservice, and Long-term Care Facilities](#). Restaurants with an employee testing positive for COVID-19 should reference the Level RED: Proactive Remediation measures for the different areas of their restaurants to respond to CDC cleaning recommendations.

Wellness Checks

ARA as partnered with WeeCare to provide ARA members access to their [Fever Free App](#) at a discounted price. The Fever Free app enables employers to receive wellness check information, including verified temperature checks, from their employees remotely.

Restaurant COVID-19 Guidance

[ARA Welcome Back to the Table: Restaurant Reopening Guidance](#)

[Arizona Department of Health Services Guidance for Restaurants/Food Establishments Providing Dine-in Services](#)

[National Restaurant Association Reopening Guidance](#)

[ServSafe COVID-19 Training and Resources](#)