



# **Norfolk County Employee Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios**

**Approved by the  
Norfolk County Commissioners  
*January 27, 2021***

## Overview

In Norfolk County's Employee Training and Reopening Protocols, approved in June 2020, the goal of the safe return to work was put into place. A safe in-person Norfolk County environment requires a culture of health and safety every step of the way.

## Introduction

These protocols aim to build upon earlier Norfolk County Employee Training protocols and the Employee Travel Policy that became effective beginning August 29, 2020. They aim to help provide guidance, expectations, and clarity pertaining to the following questions, especially as public health protocols about COVID-19 continue to evolve:

- What should Norfolk County and its Departments do if there is a symptomatic or asymptomatic employee who works in a Norfolk County building?
- What if a Norfolk County employee is identified as a close contact of an individual inside and outside of the workplace who tests positive for COVID-19?
- What should Norfolk County and its Departments do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19?
- What are Norfolk County's cleaning protocols relating to COVID-19?
- Who should get tested for COVID-19 and when?
- In what circumstances would close contacts need to be quarantine due to an exposure to COVID-19 (when they might have been exposed) or isolate due to a positive test result to COVID-19 (when they test positive)?

The Registry of Deeds' COVID-19 protocols, policies, procedures and work plans in place since March of 2020 remain in place and will continue. A Registry employee meeting any of the following categories—COVID-19 positive, symptomatic, non-symptomatic, a contact to a COVID-19 positive individual, or is a contact to a contact of a COVID-19 individual—will quarantine for 14 days. The Return to Work protocol is that a quarantining Registry employee must provide a negative COVID-19 test result taken 48 hours prior to the end of the 14 day quarantine period. This test result must be produced and satisfactory to the Registry of Deeds prior to the Registry employee being allowed to return to work.

## Specifically:

- ❖ It is not one mitigation strategy but a combination of all these strategies taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. No single strategy can ever be perfect, but all strategies together will reduce risk.
- ❖ Employees must monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms. Everyone must do their part to protect others and not come to work if they are exhibiting any COVID-19

symptoms i.e. fever (temperature over 100.0 degrees), cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, muscle or body aches, fatigue, sore throat, headache, congestion or runny nose, new onset loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea or are feeling sick. Please see page 3 of this document for the policy of when an employee may return to work after COVID-19 symptoms.

- ❖ Masks are among the most important single measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. County Departments will continue to make facemasks available to employees upon request on an as-needed basis.
- ❖ **All employees are required to wear facemasks that adequately cover both their nose and mouth. Certain employees may be exempted from wearing a facemask including those communicating with people who rely on lip-reading, those who cannot breathe safely, and others. Employees who may be exempt from wearing a facemask should speak with their supervisor and follow up with the County's Manager of Personnel Services for appropriate accommodations. Again, those employees who are not exempt from wearing a facemask are required to wear facemasks. Compliance with the above mask policy is considered a condition of continued employment. Non-exempt Employees who do not comply with this requirement will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.**
  - All employees must wear a facemask at all times when not alone in their own office/workspace. All union Maintenance Employees must wear a facemask even when working outside or in County vehicles when not alone.
  - Masks must be worn whenever interacting with the public, in-person, state and County employees face to face.
  - When wearing a facemask, it must include covering over both nose and mouth.
  - In a shared office space, you must wear a facemask at all times.
  - If you are in an isolated office/workspace, you do not need to wear a facemask when alone in your office/workspace; however, once you leave your area, you must wear a facemask.
- ❖ Kitchens and break rooms should be limited to one person at a time.
- ❖ Hand hygiene is critical. Employees are required to exercise hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) upon arrival at work, before eating, and before putting on and taking off masks. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best practice. However, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can be substituted when handwashing is not available. Hand sanitizer stations are set up in common areas and hallways in all Norfolk County buildings.
- ❖ Physical distance greatly reduces the risk of transmission. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH)

recommend 6 feet of distance between individuals to decrease interact times less than 15 minutes throughout a 24-hour period.

To support a culture of health and safety, Norfolk County must have robust and reliable ways to communicate with employees in order to send and receive key messages related to COVID-19. The County continues to communicate with its employees through its Department Heads and through the “News” section of the County website, [www.norfolkcounty.org](http://www.norfolkcounty.org). If an employee has been identified as a close contact, they will be contacted directly via phone or email with guidance.

### **Preparing to respond to COVID-19 scenarios**

Even as we remain vigilant, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at work will not be zero. We must prepare to respond to potential scenarios.

### **Testing, contact tracing, and quarantine/isolation**

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing, quarantining and isolation, helps prevent further spread of COVID-19. All test results, both positive and negative, are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, the local public health department and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) will reach out to provide guidance so that these individuals can maintain safely in isolation. The local public health department or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) will also ask for help identifying from the COVID-19 positive employee to identify close contacts. The close contacts will be contacted but the employee’s identification will remain confidential. These professionals will then reach out to the individual’s close contacts to provide important information that is aimed to stop the spread of the virus, including how to safely quarantine/get tested. While these professionals will provide support to further assist with contact tracing, the COVID-19 positive employee is required to immediately notify their Department Head, who in turn, is required to immediately notify the County Director and the local public health department if applicable.

### **Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive employee cases is a minimum of 14 days**

Norfolk County employees who test positive will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 14 days. People who test positive can resume public activities after 14 days and once they have:

- a) Gone for 24 hours without a fever (and without taking fever-reduction medications like Tylenol), and

- b) Experienced improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has gotten much better), and
- c) Received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (local public health officials or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) or their personal physician.
- d) Receive and produce a negative test result. The Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) would advise no test because one can test positive for several months.

### **Definition of a close contact**

For general guidance, the CDC defines close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the infected patient is isolated.

### **Protocol on how long an employee identified as a close contact must quarantine**

A close contact will need to remain quarantined for at least 14 days from the date of last exposure provided all of the following are satisfied:

- Have not had, and do not have, any symptoms,
- If not symptomatic, are tested on at least day 8 of your quarantine period or later using a molecular diagnostic test (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) to detect the presence of the virus, and
- Monitor yourself for symptoms for the full 14 days. If you develop symptoms, you should contact your health care provider and be re-tested.

### **Most common symptoms of COVID-19 and testing requirements**

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to stay home until you receive a negative test. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold. Please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home and get tested.

### **Please stay home if you have any of the symptoms listed**

- Fever (100.0) degrees Fahrenheit or higher), chills or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat

- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

If an employee has any of these symptoms listed above, they should be tested and must follow the protocols outline in the following pages.

**While specific protocols vary, there are some common elements for each possible COVID-19 scenario:**

- Evaluate symptoms
- Stay at home and separate from others
- Test for COVID-19 and stay at home while awaiting results
- If the test is positive:
  - Monitor symptoms
  - Answer the call from the local public health officials and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) to help identify close contacts to help them prevent transmission.
  - Immediately notify your County Department Head and provide information about any close contacts with any other Norfolk County employee, Trial Court employee, and/or any other person or persons who regularly do business in Norfolk County buildings, who have been identified with local public health officials and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC).
  - Secure release from contact tracers (local public health officials and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) or your primary care physician to return to work).
  - Remain at home for at least cumulative 14 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms

### **Norfolk County COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols**

As indicated in the County's COVID-19 Employee Training Protocols, approved by the Norfolk County Commissioners on June 10, 2020, County employees are regularly required to wipe down and clean their own workspaces equipment with disinfectant wipes/cleaners (computer, phone, desk, etc.) upon entry and exit on a daily basis. Employees are strongly encouraged to wash hands and use hand sanitizer often, including after cleaning equipment and work areas.

The County's Facilities Maintenance Department continues to thoroughly clean and wipe down public spaces and common areas used in all Norfolk County buildings, and more often on surfaces that are frequently touched, including the regular cleaning and bleaching of bathrooms and other high contact areas. In addition to said regular cleaning protocols, the Superintendent of Buildings has proactively established a Tuesday and Friday electrostatic spray sanitizing regimen in each County owned-building.

In the event a County employee tests positive for COVID-19 and the employee was working on the premises during the infectious period, the Building/Department where the COVID-19 positive individual works shall be shut down for at least the remainder of the day so said area can be deep cleaned and disinfected, if it has not been already deep cleaned and disinfected per Massachusetts State guidelines on disinfecting and cleaning protocols.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-i-office-spaces-checklist/download>

A Deep Cleaning consists of electrostatically spray sanitizing, wiping down and disinfecting all public surfaces and restrooms in a County building, as well as employee work spaces, phones, desks, chairs, office handles, door knobs, railings, and any other employee/public touch points.

Additional disinfecting and deep cleaning efforts may be completed at the discretion of the Superintendent of Buildings based on individual Department and County building circumstances, as well as guidance and recommendations from local public health officials.

### **The following sections outline protocols for the scenarios below.**

#### **Section 1: Protocols for individual exposure or individual positive test**

- Protocol: Employee test positive for COVID-19
- Protocol: Close contact of employee test positive for COVID-19
- Protocol: Employee is symptomatic at home
- Protocol: Employee is symptomatic at work

#### **Section 2: Protocols for County buildings with multiple COVID-19 cases**

- Protocol: Presences of multiple cases in a Norfolk County building

#### **Section 1: Protocols for employee who tests positive for COVID-19**

1. The employee must remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify their County Department Head, notify personal close contacts, assist local public health officials and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) to help identify close contacts to help them prevent transmission.

2. The employee informs their Department Head that they have tested positive for COVID-19. The Department Head then contacts the County Director and Manager of Personnel Services, who, together with the applicable Department head, contacts the local public health department in the community in which the County building is located.
3. Determine whether the employee was on the premises during the time frame that started 2 days before symptom onset (or test date if asymptomatic) until the time of isolation.

If so, promptly close-down during infectious period the Building/Department where the COVID-19 positive individual works for the remainder of the day so such area can be cleaned and disinfected if they have not been cleaned and disinfected already.

4. Communicate with employees who are identified as close contacts.
  - a. Local public health officials and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC), together with County officials, should identify the employee's possible close contacts as previously defined based on the proximity related to work activities.
  - b. Notify the employees, if any, who are identified as close contacts that there has been a positive test while maintain confidentiality of the positive employee.
    - i. Instruct close contacts to quarantine immediately and recommend testing and employees must stay out of work while waiting for the results.
    - ii. Close contacts should be tested for COVID-19 at one of Massachusetts' test sites or through their primary care physician. Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
    - iii. Close contacts who are Norfolk County employees shall communicate their test results to their Department Head and the Manager of Personnel Services.
    - iv. Employees will need to remain quarantined for at least 14 days from the date of last exposure provided all of the following are satisfied:
      - Have not had, and do not have any symptoms,
      - Are tested on day 8 of your quarantine period or later using a molecular diagnostic test (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) to detect the presence of the virus,
      - Receive and produce a negative test result, and

- Monitor yourself for symptoms for the full 14 days. If you develop symptoms, you should contact your health care provider and be re-tested.
      - If test an employee receives a positive COVID-19 test result, a negative test result must be produced to the employee's Department Head and County Director in order for the employee to return to work.
  - c. If the County Department Head is notified about an employee's COVID-19 positive test during the workday:
    - i. The Department Head shall ask employee to leave for the day then immediately contact the County Director and Manager of Personnel Services in order to consult local public health officials in order to identify the individuals who may be close contacts and notify them of the potential exposure.
    - ii. Employees identified as close contacts will need to remain quarantined for at least 14 days from the date of last exposure provided all of the following are satisfied will need to meet the above criteria to return to work:
      - Have not had, and do not have any symptoms,
      - If not symptomatic, are tested on day 8 of your quarantine period or later using a molecular diagnostic test (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) to detect the presence of the virus,
      - Receive and produce a negative test result, and
      - Monitor yourself for symptoms for the full 14 days. If you develop symptoms you should contact your health care provider and be re-tested.
  - d. **The County of Norfolk has extended the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) employee paid leave benefits through March 31, 2021. Employees who have exhausted their FFCRA leave shall use their earned sick time, accrued vacation or personal time while out of work in accordance with these protocols.**
5. If others in the Department/Building test positive, perform all steps under this protocol for each employee who tests positive.
  6. Any area of the Department/Building visited by the COVID-19 positive individual must be closed off for the remainder of the day in order to be cleaned and disinfected.

### **Protocol: Employee is symptomatic at home**

1. Employees should monitor themselves at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 as listed above.
  - a. If no symptoms:
    - i. Come to work.
  - b. If experiencing any symptoms:
    - i. Do not come to work.
    - ii. Contact your Department Head and follow the absence reporting protocols established by your department.
    - iii. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested. The employee should get tested at one of Massachusetts' test sites <https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e3a3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13> or through their primary care physician. Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
    - iv. Isolate at home until test results are returned.
    - v. Proceed as follows according to test results:
      1. If negative: Employee may return to work after they have test negative for COVID-19 and, have an improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for COVID-19 like symptoms, the individual may return to work based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis) with a provider's note.
      2. If positive: Employee should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify their Department Head, the County Director and Manager of Personnel Services, and answer the call from the local public health department and/or the Massachusetts COVID-19 Tracing Project.

### **Protocol: Employee is symptomatic at work**

As noted above, an employee should not to come to work and utilize their accrued sick leave if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

1. If an employee develops any symptoms during the workday, they should notify their supervisor, clean/wipe down their immediate workspace, and go home.

- a. If any symptoms:
  - i. The employee should get tested at one of Massachusetts' test sites or through their primary care physician. Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
  - ii. Isolate at home until test results are returned.
  - iii. Proceed as follows according to test results:
    - 1. If negative: Employees may return to work after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have an improvement in symptoms and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to work based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis) with a provider's note.
    - 2. If positive: Employee should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify their Department Head, the County Director and the Manager of Personnel Services, and answer the call from the local health department and/or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC).

## **Section 2: Protocols for Norfolk County Building with multiple COVID-19 cases**

### **Protocol: Presence of multiple cases in a Norfolk County Building**

1. If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case in a Norfolk County building at one time, or if there is a series of single cases in a short period, the Norfolk County Administrative team, which includes the County Director, Manager of Personnel Services, and the County Department Head, shall work with the local public health department to assess whether it is likely that there is transmission happening in the workplace.
2. For each case, follow steps under: **Protocol: Employee tests positive for COVID-19.**  
 When there is suspected at work transmission beyond one cohort or a small number of cohorts, County's Administrative team will consult with the local public health department and other applicable state/local partners to determine the next steps. These steps include a review of the specific COVID-19 public health metrics for the municipality, and could lead to, for example, a decision to close part of the building or the entire building for a specified period of time (e.g., 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation.

**Quick Reference Sheet: Key Actions for Individual COVID-19 Events**

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	Quarantine
<b>Employee is symptomatic</b>	If an employee is symptomatic at home, they should stay home and get tested.	Employee tests <b><u>negative</u></b>	Employees may return to work after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have an improvement in symptoms and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for COVID-19 like symptoms, the individual may return to work based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis) with a provider’s note.
		Employee test <b><u>positive</u></b>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify their Department Head, the County Director, Manager of Personnel Services, and answer the call from the local public health department and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC).
<b>The employee is exposed to COVID-19 positive colleague</b>	<p>If an employee is at home when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 8 days after their last exposure, if they have not had, and do not have any symptoms.</p> <p>If an employee is at work when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should return home and immediately begin quarantining.</p>	Employee test <b><u>negative</u></b>	<p>Remain quarantined for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 14 days from the date of last exposure, and               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have not had, and do not have any symptoms,</li> <li>○ If not symptomatic, are tested on day 8 of your quarantine period or later using a molecular diagnostic test (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) to detect the presence of the virus,</li> <li>○ Receive a negative test result, and</li> <li>○ Monitor yourself for symptoms for the full 14 days. If you develop symptoms, contact your health care provider and be re-tested.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Employee test <b><u>positive</u></b>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify their Department Head, the County Director, Manager of Personnel Services, and answer the call from the local public health department and/or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC).

This page intentionally left blank