



COVID-19 Notification Protocols

Issue Date: April 7, 2020

Updated: July 7, 2020

Updated: September 16, 2020

Updated: May 19, 2021

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) is continuing to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on children, families, our staff and partner providers throughout the state. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) are providing ongoing guidance and direction regarding necessary precautions to prevent transmission of the virus.

This document describes how the DCF Office of Human Resources (OHR) will proceed when it learns staff, while in the office, may have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive or suspected positive individual. This document also describes the steps that DCF staff should take if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to potential exposure to someone with COVID-19.¹

If any DCF staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine because there is a suspicion of exposure to COVID-19, the person should immediately notify the OHR at DCFhumanres@dcf.nj.gov or (609)-486-1061 Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

This is an important step. Central Office staff, including representatives from OHR, the Office of Employee Relations (OER), the DCF Office of Emergency Management (DCFOEM) and the Office of Facilities and Support Services (OFSS) are working together to confirm facts and coordinate the appropriate response, as quickly and as accurately as possible. This includes notifying affected staff who may be at risk of exposure and sending daily notification to all DCF employees if there is a positive case(s) or no confirmed cases within the preceding 24 hours.

¹ The timeframe of the quarantine period may vary between 14 days to 7 days for employees as per the [DOH recommended minimum quarantine timeframes](#). Accordingly, OHR will advise you of the appropriate timeframe during the screening process.

During this process, OHR staff will ask a series of questions related to date(s) the employee was last in the office, where he or she was in the office and with whom he or she may have come into contact. The DCFOEM will also contact the relevant local health department and/or the New Jersey Department of Health to obtain additional guidance.

Staff who may have been in close contact with an individual that has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis will receive notice from OHR. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet (2 meters) of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, without a face mask, starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

OHR will also notify DCF Leadership, including the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, the Chief of Staff, the relevant Cost Center Manager and the Director of OFSS. DCF will follow NJ Department of Treasury guidelines to determine whether to close an office, redeploy staff, forward telephone lines and/or equipment in consultation with OFSS.

As part of DCF's response and preparedness efforts, it has contracted with cleaning services to perform daily cleaning of all open DCF office locations. In addition, OFSS will, upon receiving confirmation that a DCF staff member has been recently diagnosed with or is suspected (i.e. exhibiting symptoms and diagnosis is pending test results) to have COVID-19, immediately contact the Department of Treasury to make arrangements for the staff person's office location to be cleaned. The Department of Treasury will determine the type of cleaning to be employed, per their protocols. If the employee was utilizing a state vehicle, it will also be cleaned and sanitized. Depending upon the building and requirements for cleaning, staff may be asked to vacate the premises to facilitate the cleaning process and will be informed when it is permissible to return to the office.

How Can You Protect Yourself?

- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- **If you are not wearing a face mask, cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **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 a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**.

- Wear a **face mask** in all public settings. Click [here](#) to check out the state’s COVID-19 information hub.
- When you leave home and when you are in the office, follow **social distancing** practices; put **at least 6 feet between yourself and other people**. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Minimize in-person socializing with colleagues**.

What If I Am Experiencing Symptoms?

If you are experiencing:

- At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measured or subjective), chills, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose;

OR

- Any one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, inability to wake or stay awake, persistent pain or pressure in the chest

Then, you should **immediately** contact your personal medical provider for advice. **Do not** report to work if you are experiencing symptoms or are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. You should also immediately alert the OHR at DCFhumanres@dcf.nj.gov or (609)-486-1061 Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. If you feel well enough to work, your cost center manager will advise you whether or not you can work remotely while you wait for your results.

Where Can I find More Information?

- For questions related to COVID-19, please refer to the state’s [COVID-19](#) information hub or to these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) issued by the New Jersey Department of Health.
- There is also a wealth of information on the CDC website about [preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities](#).
- If you or members of your family are struggling, please check out the [many resources available](#) for assistance.

Our guidance is this: If you are not feeling well, please stay home and consult with your healthcare provider. This guidance is extremely important. Consult with your healthcare

provider and stay at home until you receive approval to return to work. Please update your direct supervisor and OHR accordingly.

Travel Advisory Protocol

On May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that the State has rescinded its [travel and quarantine restrictions](#). You can now resume non-essential travel without having to quarantine upon your return to New Jersey. Guidance issued by the NJDOH encourages New Jersey residents to follow [the recommendations by the CDC](#).

On April 27, 2021, the CDC released updated guidance for [Domestic](#) and International travel for people who are [fully vaccinated](#) or persons who have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past three months. Testing and quarantine are no longer recommended by the CDC for people who travel domestically. Because [International travel](#) poses additional risks, testing before arrival to the U.S. is required (or documentation of recent recovery) and testing (3-5 days) after arrival is recommended for fully vaccinated persons. There is no longer a requirement to quarantine. Conversely, the CDC continues to [recommend](#) that unvaccinated people get tested pre/post travel and quarantine.

- A “**fully vaccinated**” individual is someone who is at least 2 weeks beyond the date of the final vaccine dose administration against COVID-19. For some manufacturers, this means 2 weeks after their single-dose vaccine, whereas for other manufacturers, this means 2 weeks after the second dose in their 2-dose vaccine series.
- A “**clinically recovered**” individual is someone who is documented to have symptomatically recovered from COVID-19 within the past 3 months.
- **Fully vaccinated and clinically recovered** individuals do not require a travel quarantine for domestic travel or international travel, unless they display symptoms of COVID-19.
- A **non-fully vaccinated** person who clinically recovered from COVID-19 greater than 3 months ago should follow the quarantine recommendations for unvaccinated individuals.

If applicable, an employee should not be permitted to return to the workplace until the required quarantine period has expired unless the individual is otherwise exempt. DCF will attempt to accommodate the employee with remote work whenever possible. OHR will also consider whether the employee falls within an exemption and thus may be permitted to continue working subject to procedures outlined by the CDC ([here](#) and [here](#)); An employee who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine, may be eligible for the [State COVID-19 Emergency Leave benefits](#).

Vaccine

At this time, all New Jersey residents, ages 12 and older, are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. DCF encourages all eligible staff to register at a vaccine [location](#) to receive one of the available vaccines. OHR will ask an employee during the initial screening after a possible exposure or when he or she returns from travel if they have been vaccinated to determine if the employee is required to quarantine. OHR's questioning is an acceptable practice pursuant to guidance issued by the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#).