

## Health and Safety Guidelines

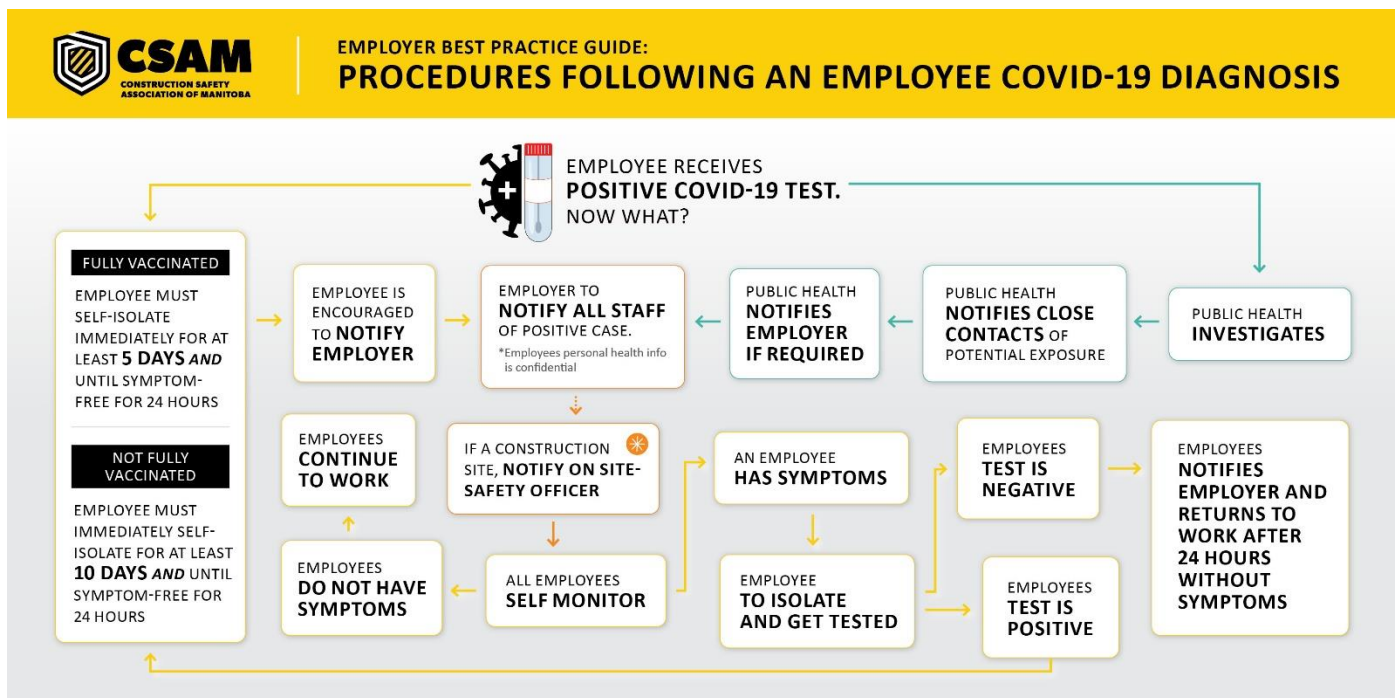
### Step-by-Step Procedures Following an Employee COVID-19 Diagnosis

The health and safety of employees is paramount during COVID-19. Business continuity remains a critical concern, but employee wellness remains the most important issue facing employers in these challenging circumstances. For leaders, one question looms larger than all others: what do we do when one of our people tests positive?

CSAM has prepared the following recommendations to guide construction employers through the necessary steps that follow a positive COVID-19 diagnosis and eventual return to work. It is important to note that the employee should advise their employer immediately upon first suspicion that they may be infected.

Manitoba Public Health officials will direct any person with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis to self-isolate for a minimum of five days if fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (or 10 days if not fully vaccinated). Public Health officials will conduct an investigation to determine if that person was at work while infectious. If any additional measures need to be taken at your workplace, public health officials will call you directly to provide advice.

When determining whether or not to get tested for COVID-19, encourage employees to use Shared Health's [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#) online. In addition to the direction of Manitoba Public Health officials, the following is provided as practical guidance for an employer, managers, and employees to follow in order to assist in reducing the risk of further transmission and protecting each other.



## 1. Employee self-isolate

- **Positive COVID-19 employee**
- **Any unvaccinated person identified as a close contact by Public Health**

Public Health will direct any person with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis to [self-isolate \(stay home\)](#) under the following guidelines:

- **If fully vaccinated and without symptoms**, individuals need to isolate for five days from the date of their positive test.
- **If fully vaccinated and displaying symptoms**, individuals need to isolate for five days from the day their symptoms started or the date of the test, whichever is later. They must also continue to isolate until they no longer have a fever and their other symptoms have been improving over the past 24 hours.
- **If not fully vaccinated**, individuals need to isolate for 10 days from the date of their positive test. They must also continue to isolate until they no longer have a fever and their other symptoms have been improving over the past 24 hours.

Public Health will initiate an investigation to determine others who may have come into close contact with the COVID-19-positive employee. Any other employee that has been determined to have been in close contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19 will be expected to get tested and if not fully vaccinated, must also self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days since their last contact with the employee who tested positive. Persons who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and not displaying symptoms are not required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact but should continue to self-monitor for symptoms.

Individuals who test positive with a Rapid Antigen Test should assume they have COVID-19 and do not need to get a follow up PCR test to confirm, unless they fall into a specific high-risk group or hold a front-line responder/health care position. For full details and the list of who must still get a PCR test, check [the Province of Manitoba's testing eligibility](#).

**A CLOSE CONTACT is someone who has been within two metres/six feet for more than 10 minutes total over 24 hours with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.**

## 2. Identify

- **Conduct an investigation and contact tracing**

In addition to the Public Health investigation, employers should also immediately conduct their own investigation. Make a list of each person with whom the infected employee was in close contact at any point during the infectious period. This may include others outside of your organization, including suppliers and visitors if you have not yet restricted visitor access.

- a) Identify the dates when the COVID-19 positive employee was in the workplace.
- b) Determine activities of the COVID-19 positive employee for each of those dates.
- c) Make a list of whom the COVID-19 positive employee was in contact (employees, work groups, visitors etc.), the duration of the contact, and whether or not hygiene and physical distancing protocols were followed.
- d) Determine employees at risk of exposure to the virus through close contact.

NOTE: Public Health contact-tracing personnel will ask you to identify worker schedules, work tasks, cohort work groups, and visitor activity dates.

## 3. Communicate

- **Notify personnel you anticipate will be identified as close contacts**
- **Notify employees**
- **Other individuals/employers that were present at the workplace during the identified dates**

Confidentiality matters. Keep in mind that a positive COVID-19 diagnosis is a medical diagnosis and is to be treated as confidential medical information. **Ensure that the infected employee is not identified by name** as having contracted the virus, in compliance with the various pieces of legislation that cover personal health privacy information across Canada.

Public Health officials will contact employees they determine to have been in close contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19. Public Health officials will direct these individuals to isolate for a minimum of 10 days since their last contact with the employee who tested positive if they are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. If fully vaccinated and not showing symptoms, there is no need to self-isolate.

It is advisable to immediately inform any at-risk employee of your findings of the high probability they will be identified as a close contact by Public Health officials. As an immediate preventative measure prior to Public Health notification, the affected employees should self-monitor for symptoms, and if experiencing symptoms, get tested. If an employee has not been identified as a close contact by Public Health, they may return to work and continue self-monitoring for symptoms.

As per an employer's legislated duty to share required information, a general communication to all others that may have been affected is required. At minimum, this communication would advise of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis at the workplace and dates of possible exposure. Remember that personal health information must remain confidential — do not identify the name of the COVID-19 positive person.

CSAM has created two sample notification letter templates:

- [Notification letter template 1](#)
- [Notification letter template 2](#)

#### 4. Control

- **Disinfect**
- **Maintain rigorous hygiene and physical distancing protocol**
- **Consider vulnerable workers, health screening of workers/visitors**
- **Self-monitor**
- **Test**

Use [proper procedure to clean and disinfect](#) all areas/surfaces the COVID-19 positive employee had recently been in contact with. Remind all personnel of the importance of close adherence to [hygiene and physical distancing protocols](#).

Communicate what steps have been taken to disinfect the workplace to your team, along with what to do if they have concerns. Ensuring that your employees are aware of what has been done to protect them is a legislated responsibility and good practice.

Many of the employees that have come into contact with the COVID-19 positive employee will be classified as “indirect contacts.” Generally, indirect contacts would be recommended to self-monitor and seek testing if any symptoms appear.

NOTE: If the owner or manager of a business or facility becomes aware that two or more persons working at the same location at the business or facility have contracted COVID-19, the operator must immediately notify the chief provincial public health officer and provide information respecting the location and cases. The owner or manager may be required to complete [an online reporting form](#).

Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) may become involved to review an employers' pandemic plan if Public Health determines that there is workplace transmission. Areas of practice that WSH will review include but are not limited to health screening for workers and visitors; hygiene and cough etiquette; physical distancing or alternatives (i.e. barriers and/or face coverings, cohort work groups, staggered shifts, etc.); consideration of vulnerable workers; cleaning and disinfection; and worker communication.

## Employees returning to work after recovery from COVID-19

Following their isolation period, it is expected to be safe for the employee to return to work, provided they are feeling well and symptom-free for 24 hours. In the case of a fully vaccinated person, they may be allowed to return to work after five days of isolation, provided they no longer have a fever and their other symptoms have been improving over the past 24 hours. However, these individuals must wear a medical grade mask in public settings for five days following their isolation period. **Employees do not need to provide a negative test in order to return to work** — they only need to listen to the guidance of public health officials.

### Further information

The Construction Safety Association of Manitoba invites you to visit our dedicated [COVID-19 Resource page](#) to help keep you informed and implement best practices regarding COVID-19. We have created and compiled in-depth guidelines, safe work practices, resources, and trusted links. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [safety@constructionsafety.ca](mailto:safety@constructionsafety.ca) or 204-775-3171 (Head Office) or 204-728-3456 (Westman Office).

For specific medical questions, please contact Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.