



Letter to All Employees of the City of Philadelphia

To all employees of the City of Philadelphia,

As we anticipated, the first few City employees have tested positive for COVID-19 infection and unfortunately, we expect more soon. We are committed to supporting our workforce and doing everything possible to keep you all healthy, knowing that the City of Philadelphia is relying on you to maintain essential City services during this outbreak. We are grateful for your dedication – always, but particularly during this difficult time.

In many or most cases, the source of infection for City employees who contract COVID-19 will be from home, rather than the workplace, but we may never be able to determine the source in most cases. We want to do everything possible to protect our employees from infection in the workplace and to ensure that you have the information you need to protect yourself at work and at home.

The following protocol is in place for any City employee who tests positive for COVID-19 coronavirus infection:

- As soon as a case is identified, supervisors should identify all employees who need to self-quarantine at home and monitor for symptoms. This includes any employee who has spent at least 10 minutes within 6 feet of the person with infection.
- If an employee who is [quarantining at home](#) develops symptoms, they should contact their healthcare provider and inform their supervisor.
- All frequently touched surfaces in the workplace including workstations, countertops, doorknobs, elevator buttons, stairwell railings, refrigerator handles and water fountains/coolers, will be wiped down with disinfectant.
- Employees who were in the same indoor environment with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, but who are not considered to be close contacts according to criteria from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC considers people to be close contacts if they have spent more than 10 minutes within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 infection or are household contacts), should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after their last contact with the case and isolate if symptoms develop.
- The reason that people who sit more than 6 feet away from someone with infection are not considered to need to quarantine is that this disease is spread through respiratory droplets, which do not travel far through the air. Unlike more highly infectious diseases like measles, which travels through the air, COVID-19 only travels a few feet when someone coughs or sneezes.



- We are trying to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of people with this infection, so the names of any employees diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be circulated.

Employees should continue to follow the sick leave policies currently in place, as directed in [Policy Statement #3 issued on March 18, 2020](#).

The City also has additional [guidance for businesses on our website](#), which provides detail on handling Covid-19 cases in the workplace.

For all of us, it is important to proactively take steps to prevent infection. COVID-19 principally spreads via respiratory droplets, when someone coughs or sneezes near (within 6 feet) someone else or when someone touches a surface that someone who is sick has recently touched (a door handle, for example). That makes the following measures important and effective at protecting yourself:

- If you are sick, stay home and try to stay away from other people.
- If you have had contact of someone with COVID-19 infection within 14 days, **or if you have traveled to New York City or the surrounding counties (Nassau, Westchester or Suffolk counties in NY or Bergen County in NJ) within the last 14 days notify your supervisor and self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Please note this is a new requirement as of March 25, 2020.**
- Work remotely if possible.
- Hold meetings by telephone or video call, rather than in person.
- Where possible keep 6 feet apart from other staff members and from the public.
- Change schedules to minimize the number of people in the office at any given time.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20-30 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Reduce the number of people that you are around – the fewer the better.
- Think about ways to get supplies delivered rather than going out to stores.
- Call people on the phone rather than visiting them in person
- Try to not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Try to stay away from people who are sick.
- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw away tissues in a trash can and immediately wash your hands.
- You don't need to wear a mask unless you are sick yourself.

For more information on the COVID-19 coronavirus, see [COVID coronavirus and Philadelphia: Everything you need to know](#).