DATE: February 16, 2022
TO: All City Supervisors
FROM: Amber Haglund-Pagel
SUBJECT: Updated COVID-19 Quarantine and Return-To-Work Guidance

This guidance may change as we learn more about the spread and prevention of COVID-19. Updated guidance will be sent out as needed.

Definition of “Close Contact” used for Quarantine Guidance:

- You were within 6 feet of a positive COVID case for at least 15 minutes (cumulative over 24 hours)
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Definition of “Fully Vaccinated“:

Having completed ALL recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine when eligible, including a booster or additional doses. This is not a Minnesota Department of Health term but used for City of Duluth purposes of determining likely immunity levels to COVID-19. The Minnesota Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control state, “Up to date means a person has received ALL the recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.”

Symptomatic Employees (those having symptoms)

1. Employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 should not report to work, even if they have been fully vaccinated. If symptoms develop during the day, the employee should be sent home immediately. Symptoms may include any of the following, if not attributable to another condition:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
2. Symptomatic employees should pursue COVID-19 testing, regardless of vaccination status. PCR testing is far more accurate than rapid testing, so PCR tests will be used as our standard. The following is a non-exhaustive list of area providers that currently offer testing:
   a. Essentia: To start an E-Visit evaluation, the employee should go to https://www.essentiahealth.org/covid-19/ and follow the online directions.
   b. Vault: Walk-in testing is currently available at the DECC Tuesdays through Saturdays.
   c. St. Luke’s: A number of locations offer this testing, and are listed at https://www.silduluth.com/patients-visitors/patient-resources/covid-19/

3. If an employee has symptoms they must quarantine at home until their test result is available.
   a. If test is positive: Employee will notify supervisor and follow isolation protocol (outlined on Page 3 and 4 of this memo).
   b. If test is negative: Employee will notify supervisor. Follow usual employer illness protocol.

Asymptomatic Employees (those showing no symptoms)
1. Any employee who is not fully vaccinated (see definition on page 1) and has had close contact with a confirmed or suspect case of COVID-19 should:
   a. Quarantine for at least 7 full days from the last day of close contact, which is considered “day zero.”
   b. If the close contact was a “suspect case” whose test result comes back negative, the employee may return to work at that time, if it is before the 7-day mark.
   c. If they’re symptom-free after 7 full days of quarantine, they can return to work sites but must wear a well-fitting mask and distance from others until 10 days after the close contact.
   d. If they develop symptoms, they should continue to quarantine, seek testing, and await results before returning to the work site.
   e. They should get tested at least 5 days after the close contact even if they have no symptoms.

2. Any employee who is not fully vaccinated (see definition on page 1) and shares a household with a known COVID case that they CANNOT reasonably avoid close contact with should:
   a. Quarantine for the household member’s 5 days isolation (per MDH), plus an additional 7 days – totaling 12 days, starting from the first day of symptoms or positive test of the affected household member, whichever came first.
      • If the employee develops symptoms during this time they should continue to quarantine, seek testing, and await results before returning to their work site.
      • They should get tested at least 5 days after their initial close contact, even if they have no symptoms.
• If they’re symptom-free and have not tested positive at the end of the 12-day quarantine they can return to the work site.
• They must continue to wear a well-fitting mask when around others, and wash hands before leaving home and upon arrival at work, for an additional 3 calendar days after their return.

Fully Vaccinated Employees

(Having completed ALL recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine when eligible, including a booster or additional doses)

1. If a fully vaccinated employee has COVID-19 symptoms, they should quarantine and pursue testing. If they test positive, they should follow the quarantine protocol under the “Employees Recovering from COVID-19 Illness” heading. If they test negative, they can return to work when feeling well again.

2. If a fully vaccinated employee has close contact with a known case of COVID, even in their own household, they do not have to quarantine, but should still:
   a. Pursue testing at least 5 days after the last close contact.
   b. Avoid all close contact with others at work, including riding in vehicles with others, for 10 days after the last close contact.
   c. Wear a well-fitting mask when around others for 10 days following the last close contact.
   d. If the case is in their household, they must wash their hands before leaving home, and then upon arriving at work. They should also avoid close contact with the positive case in their household as much as possible during that time.

Note: Employees who have recovered from COVID-19 within the past 90 days, are not required to quarantine following exposure to a known or suspect case of COVID-19, UNLESS they start to develop symptoms. If they develop symptoms, they must quarantine and pursue testing.

Employees Recovering from COVID-19 Illness

Employees with COVID-19 may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

1. At least 7 days* have passed since symptom onset or positive test, whichever came first, and
2. The employee has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and
3. Other symptoms have improved.**
4. Upon return to work sites they must avoid all close contacts, and wear a well-fitting mask around others for an additional 3 days.
Department Specific Conditions

**The Police Department** has this specific variation to this guideline:

The Police Department will consider the day the positive test is taken as “day 1” of the isolation period, regardless of the first day of symptoms.

**Fire Operations staff** have this specific variation to the guidelines:

Fire Operations Staff who test positive will be allowed to ride in vehicles with others immediately following their 7-day isolation, but they must strictly mask around others for at least the 3 days following their return date.

*For individuals who experience serious illness from this infection, additional quarantine time may be needed, as determined by the health care provider, per CDC guidelines.

**Loss of taste or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery, and need not delay the end of isolation.

Contact Tracing:
Each department is responsible to conduct contact tracing when an employee develops a known or suspect case of COVID. Any other employees or individuals who that person had close contact with (see definition on page 1) should be identified (to the extent possible), and quarantine protocols should be determined.

1. If the potentially infected employee is symptomatic, and had close contact with any employees who are not fully vaccinated within 48 hours of their symptoms starting, those affected employees should follow the quarantine protocols under “Asymptomatic Employees” on page 2 of this memo.

2. As an additional measure of safety, once a suspect or known case is identified, the work group supervisor must ensure that common-touch surfaces in the work area are disinfected, including in shared vehicles.

Because close contact (see definition on Page 1) is what most efficiently spreads this infection at work, it should be AVOIDED unless it is absolutely necessary to complete a work task.

For questions on any of this guidance, or to report a known or suspect case in your work area, please send an email to the safety office at: covid@duluthmn.gov