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| <b>Title:</b> Return to Work – post COVID-19-for Exposures, Positive Cases and Crisis Status Designation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Procedure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOP                  |
| <b>Category:</b> Human Resources<br><b>Dept/Prog/Service:</b> Occupational Health & Safety  | <b>Distribution:</b> OHS  |
| <b>Approved:</b> VP, People & Culture<br><br><br><b>Signature:</b> | <b>Approval Date:</b> April 16, 2020<br><b>Reviewed/Revised Date:</b> Dec 29, 2022<br><b>Next Review Date:</b> Dec 29, 2023 |

CROSS REFERENCES: *If applicable.*

## 1. PURPOSE

To ensure consistent practice when directing the safe return of workers following an absence related to COVID-19.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Nurses within the Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Department will follow the process.

## 3. DEFINITION:

**Fully Vaccinated Individual:** 14 days or more since an individual has received their second dose of a 2 dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a 1 dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

**High Risk Exposure:** Individual who has had ongoing exposure to a positive case, regardless of vaccination status, or has had direct contact with infectious body fluids of a case (less than 2 meters, neither parties wore a mask and had prolonged exposure), or a Health Care Worker (HCW) had prolonged and unprotected exposure to a positive HCW.

**Low Risk Exposure:** Individual(s) consistently and appropriately wore Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the duration of interaction, or interaction was transient in nature –i.e. walking by a positive case.

RTW: Return to work

RAT: Rapid Antigen Test

**Crisis Status Designation:** The determination made by the Director or Department Chief of the portfolio in collaboration with their respective Vice President or Chief of Staff regarding the maintenance of human health resources in the cases of critical staffing shortages that impacts the return to work timelines for staff diagnosed with COVID -19.

## 4. PROCEDURE – ROUTINE PRACTICE:

### a) Sick call/failed screening:

- Employees are required to complete COVID-19 screening for each day in which they are scheduled to work or at any time that their symptoms match the COVID-19 screening tool.
- OHS confirms reason of failed screen and confirms that staff were able to book their own swab.
- If swab results are negative: employee is to remain off until symptoms are resolving for 24 hours (if testing is related to Gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms, employee to remain off until symptoms resolving for 48 hours).

**b) Process for a high-risk exposure to a positive case:**

**Exposure to Positive Household Member Process**

- Day 1 PCR swab. If asymptomatic, worker can continue working pending the PCR result.
- If no PCR testing is available, RTW after 2 negative RAT are collected 24 hours apart.
- Perform PCR test day 7.
- Perform RATs for the duration of the 10 days and follow work self-isolation protocols.
- If worker becomes symptomatic at any time, or has a positive PCR, the worker is to self-isolate, fail screening and await direction from OHS.

**Exposure to a Positive Non-Household Member Process**

- Day 1 PCR swab. If asymptomatic, worker can continue working pending the PCR result.
- If no PCR testing is available, RTW after 2 negative RAT are collected 24 hours apart.
- Perform RATs for the duration of the 10 days and follow work self-isolation protocols.
- If worker becomes symptomatic at any time, or RAT positive, worker will fail screen and await direction from OHS.

**Occupational Exposure to a Patient Positive for COVID-19**

- Worker will be deemed either a high-risk exposure or low risk exposure by OHS.
- Low risk exposures will continue to monitor for symptoms and fail screening if symptoms develop so OHS can arrange for testing.
- If deemed a high risk exposure, follow exposure to positive non household member process
- The worker will complete an Employee Incident report.
- The OHS department will submit the Employee Incident report and all applicable information to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and complete a Notice of Occupational Illness to the Ontario Ministry of Labour if the worker tests positive for COVID-19.

**c) Self-isolation due to a positive COVID-19 test (PCR confirmed):**

- Community Process: Worker to isolate at home until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if GI symptoms) and no fever present. Asymptomatic individuals with a positive PCR test result do not need to self-isolate unless symptoms develop. The worker must continue to wear a mask in all public settings for the full 10 days.
- A positive RAT (Antigen test) will require confirmation with a PCR swab.
- Hospital process: Antigen testing at day 6 and 7.
  - If both are negative, worker can return to work at day 7 (7 days after symptom onset or positive test (whichever is earlier) and:
  - Symptoms need to be resolving for 24 hours (48 hours if GI symptoms) and no fever.
  - OHS to determine when worker to return to work based on symptoms.

**d) Previously Positive COVID-19 Test (Within last 90 days)**

- Workers who test positive in the previous 90 days will not be re-tested.
- If worker is having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, symptoms need to be resolving for 24 hours (48 hours if GI), and then may return to work (as long as no high-risk contacts).
- If worker has tested positive, and has had a high-risk exposure and is asymptomatic, worker may return to work following work isolation (does not have to antigen test unless it is 30 days since positive test) for the remainder of 10 days from the date of exposure.
- If worker has tested positive, and has had a high-risk exposure and is symptomatic, worker must self-isolate as identified above (4c) from the date of exposure, and must remain off of work for 10 days

**5.0 Crisis Status Designation**

- The Director or Department Chief will advise their Vice President or Chief of Staff of the need for a Crisis Designation exception.

- If Vice President approves, the Director or Chief of Department will advise OHS manager or designate of the request for Crisis Designation for their area(s) and will ensure applicability of safety precautions are known and followed.
- OHS will make the determination on if and when worker to return to work based on symptoms.
- OHS will advise the requesting Director or Chief of department of number of staff returning.
- Upon confirmation of the specifics, the Director of HR or OHS will communicate to the Senior Leadership Team through the use of the Telegram group the crisis designation, including department classifications and numbers of staff returning early.
- The designation will be done under the principles:
  - The fewest number of staff who are COVID-19 positive should be returned to work early to allow for business continuity and safe operations.
  - Staff who are nearest to completion of their self-isolation period should be returned first.

COVID Positive Staff to return to work on Day 5 only if:

- No fever AND symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if vomiting/diarrhea).

#### **6.0 Safety Precautions for RTW before Day 10:**

- MUST follow work self-isolation protocols (NO REMOVING OF MASK NEAR ANYONE)
- N95 mask if they are clinical staff or work in a patient care area. Staff who do not have direct patient contact can wear a well fitted medical mask).
- MUST ensure their patients don a mask when caring for or interacting with them
- Clinical staff should not be assigned to patients that cannot wear a mask or are non-compliant with masking
- Where possible avoid patient assignment for the following patient populations:  
Neonatal/NICU, known unvaccinated patients, immunocompromised dialysis/cancer patients, transplant patients, patients on major immunosuppressant treatment.

#### **7.0 RELATED PRACTICES AND/OR LEGISLATIONS**

Occupational Health and Safety Act

PHO

Ministry of Health, Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario, v 15 August 31, 2022