



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH COVID-19 EMPLOYEE EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide the City with a decision-making tool for determining when an employee will be excluded from working in city facilities under COVID-19 criteria, and when they can return to on-site work. It serves as a companion document to the City Screening Algorithm and provides a more in-depth explanation of protocols contained in the algorithm. This document will be updated as new public health criteria are updated and changed. Testing information and definitions can be found on pages 3 and 4.

2 COVID PROTOCOLS

2.1 City Employees

At all times, including if you must travel, please practice the following:

- a. Avoid gatherings and public areas;
- b. Whenever possible, keep a distance of at least 6 feet from others, even when all parties are wearing masks;
- c. Always wear a mask when around others;
- d. Wash or sanitize hands frequently;
- e. Avoid gathering on breaks or while eating;
- f. If you begin to feel sick during the work day, leave work immediately;
- g. Get a flu shot;
- h. Avoid sharing equipment (e.g. headsets and keyboards);
- i. Clean and disinfect common touch surfaces in your work area;
- j. Refer to the COVID Continued Operations Policy, available on the HR webpage. <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/hr/covid>
- k. When employees travel outside of New England, or when new employees are moving to New England, they must quarantine for 14 days before reporting to any City facility.

2.2 Department Heads

- a. Discourage non-essential work-related travel;
- b. All personal travel outside New England is discouraged;
- c. Discourage cruise ship travel;
- d. Ensure your staff are completing the screening questionnaire that Human Resources sends out every morning if reporting to City buildings and workplaces.

3 EMPLOYEE EXCLUSION CRITERIA

3.1 Exclude Non-Essential Employees

- a. If there are any new or unexplained Covid-19 symptoms, even mild symptoms, this includes symptoms that are similar to a cold, flu or allergies; ⁽²⁾
- b. If the staff member is reporting close contact with someone suspected or confirmed with Covid-19; ⁽³⁾
- c. If the staff member has traveled outside of New England. (refer to Travel Policy and Memo on the City website) <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/hr/covid>



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH COVID-19 EMPLOYEE EXCLUSION CRITERIA

3.2 **Excluding Essential Employees** ⁽¹⁾

Essential Employees may be permitted to continue to work following a potential exposure to Covid-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and **ALL** of the following criteria are met: ⁽²⁾

- a. The COVID-19 test was negative; (this testing condition can be waived by the HR Dept.)
- b. The employee is not exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
- c. The employee is not a household contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- d. The employee is deemed essential to the department;
- e. The employee cannot conduct essential functions remotely;
- f. There is no replacement personnel for the employee;
- g. The employee self-quarantines for all other purposes other than reporting to work; (this includes not going out for all other activities including grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, etc.)
- h. The employee wears a mask, maintains at least 6 feet of separation from other employees and customers, and participates in daily health screening while at work or other public locations;
- i. The employee is tested with a Nasopharyngeal PCR Test (COVID testing from the uppermost part of the nose and throat with a swab); if the test is negative; the employee should test again if symptoms develop; if the test is inconclusive, the employee should be retested. ⁽⁷⁾ (there is a minimum of 14 days quarantine from the date of the last exposure)
- j. All efforts should be made to limit the use of this protocol to truly essential functions whenever possible and use the non-essential criteria listed above at all other times.

4 **SYMPTOMATIC vs ASYMPOTMATIC EMPLOYEES**

4.1 **Symptomatic Essential & Non-essential Employees** ⁽²⁾

Symptomatic employees must be immediately sent home to isolate and quarantine and instructed to be tested. ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾ Testing information is found on page 4 of this document.

4.1.1 A negative test results in the employee returning to work when:

- a. Symptoms improve, **and**
- b. Employee is fever-free for at least 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine
- c. If the employee had close contact with a person suspected or confirmed to have Covid-19 or travel risk factors in the prior 14 days they must still complete their 14-day quarantine even if they test negative (unless exempted above under conditions that must be met for an essential employee to return to work). ⁽³⁾

4.1.2 A positive test results in the employee isolating at home until:

- a. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first started, **and**
- b. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without fever reducing medications and symptoms have improved.

4.2 **Asymptomatic Employees** ⁽²⁾

- a. Asymptomatic employees reporting close contact with someone suspected or confirmed with Covid-19, or who report one of the travel-related risk factors must self-quarantine



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH COVID-19 EMPLOYEE EXCLUSION CRITERIA

for 14 days from their last exposure or return from travel (unless exempted above under conditions that must be met for an essential employee to return to work).⁽³⁾

- b. Employees must wait for at least 5 days before getting tested. According to the most recent epidemiological information, testing days 5-7 has been shown to be the most accurate.

5 DEFINITIONS

1. **Essential employees:** Those employees that are deemed essential to basic functioning of the department during the Pandemic. The department head, in conjunction with the Human Resources Director, shall determine which employees are essential.
2. **Symptomatic and Asymptomatic:** If an individual is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they are considered to be symptomatic: Fever, chills, cough, shorten of breath or difficulty breathing, unusual fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. An individual is considered to be asymptomatic when NOT experiencing ANY of the above symptoms.
3. **Close Contact:** In NH, close contact is defined as being within 6' (with or without a mask) for a total of 10 cumulative minutes or more beginning 48 hours prior to illness onset or date of COVID-19 testing (associated with a positive COVID-19 test, whichever is earlier).
4. **Quarantine:** A period of separation used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others during the period of time between exposure and when COVID-19 might develop. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. Individuals in Quarantine should:
 - a. Stay home
 - b. Separate themselves from others
 - c. Monitor their health
 - d. Follow directions from NH Department of Health & Human Services <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/>
 - e. If an employee is under State of NH ordered quarantine, the State of NH will provide a letter of release to the employee when it is acceptable to return to work. The employee must provide a copy of the letter to the Portsmouth HR Department.
 - f. All efforts should be made to allow employees to work remotely during their quarantine period.
5. **Isolation:** A period of separation used keep people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case from others that are not infected. Individuals in isolation should:
 - a. Stay home;
 - b. Separate themselves from others in the home by staying in a specific “sick room” or separate area and using a separate bathroom (if available);
 - c. Monitor their health;
 - d. Follow directions from NH Department of Health & Human Services; <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/>



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH COVID-19 EMPLOYEE EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- e. If an employee is under State of NH ordered quarantine, the State of NH will provide a letter of release to the employee when it is acceptable to return to work. The employee must provide a copy of the letter to the Portsmouth HR Department.
- f. All efforts should be made to allow employees to work remotely during their quarantine period.
6. **Testing:** Does not allow a person to stop quarantining unless the individual is an essential employee and the conditions listed under the above section “Excluding Essential Employees” are met.
7. **Test Types and Accuracy:**
 - a. **Rapid Antigen Test** – COVID-19 test that uses a nasal or throat swab. The individual must be symptomatic for 5 days or less to be accurate (must also have a referral from PCP). Results typically take about 15 minutes.
 - b. **Nasopharyngeal PCR Test** – COVID-19 testing from the uppermost part of the nose and throat with a swab. The PCR test in general is more accurate; the nasopharyngeal is the most accurate test and is recommended whenever possible. Results typically take 2-5 days.
 - c. **Oropharyngeal Test** – COVID-19 testing from the back of the mouth with a swab. PCR in general is more accurate; however oropharyngeal is less accurate than nasopharyngeal. Results typically take 2-5 days.

6 COVID-19 TESTING: PORTSMOUTH NH LOCATIONS

Testing Facilities (preregistration is required for testing):

1. **Convenient MD**, 599 Lafayette Road, (833) 263-0131
<https://convenientmd.com/covid-19-testing/>
2. **Clear Choice**: 750 Lafayette Road, (603) 427-8539
www.ccmdcenters.com/virtual-visits
3. **Rite-Aid**, 1390 Lafayette Road, (603) 430-7595
www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/services/covid-19-testing
4. **Portsmouth Regional Hospital**, 333 Borthwick Avenue, (603) 436-5110
<https://portsmouthhospital.com/covid-19/#>
5. **LabCorp Self-Collection At-Home it (Mailed to your home):**
www.pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test

