Step-by-Step Guide for Supervisors during COVID-19

Purpose

This document is provided to guide supervisors with information about self-assessment, reporting and minimizing exposure to COVID-19. Materials should be read in conjunction with the Supervisor’s Guide and HR COVID-19 webpages.

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Self-Assessment and Reporting

Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Advise faculty/staff that are working onsite to complete the Workplace COVID-19 Employee/Researcher Checklist which includes completing the COVID-19 self-assessment everyday no more than ONE hour before arriving onsite and follow the recommendations provided. Supervisors are encouraged to periodically check in with faculty/staff to confirm completion.

2. Report to McMaster’s COVID-19 Rapid Response Team via email: COVIDCMG@mcmaster.ca when faculty/staff are acting on recommendations due to COVID-19 symptoms, isolation or testing. The Rapid Response Team is comprised of university leaders that will coordinate a health and safety response for the McMaster community (e.g., cleaning).
Potential COVID-19 Exposure or Positive Case

Supervisor Responsibilities if Faculty/Staff:

- have been referred for testing or advised to self-isolate
- have symptoms of COVID-19
- have tested positive for COVID-19
- have travelled from out of country within the last 14 days
- had close physical contact with someone who is having symptoms of COVID-19 or recently travelled within the last 14 days with COVID-19 symptoms

1. Advise the individual to contact McMaster’s Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) via email at occhealthnurse@mcmaster.ca.

2. Report to McMaster’s COVID-19 Rapid Response Team via email: COVIDCMG@mcmaster.ca and provide:
   - Department/Faculty name
   - Results from the individual’s Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool

   Do not include the individual’s name and only information to ensure the appropriate response is taken, e.g., cleaning location.

3. Enable and support remote work for the individual if possible and if they are well enough. If remote work is not possible, follow the guidance provided under “When an employee self-isolates or is in isolation according to Public Health guidelines” section in the Supervisor’s Guide.

4. Advise the individual of their responsibilities. Advise the individual to stay home and follow public health guidance regarding self-isolation.

5. If you have questions, contact McMaster’s Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) via email at occhealthnurse@mcmaster.ca

If an individual is onsite and not feeling well, they may notify you. They will need to immediately put on a mask if they are not already wearing one. Arrange for emergency assistance if required. If the individual is not in distress, advise them to follow up with their healthcare provider and/or complete the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool for next steps. In addition, report to the Rapid Response Team via email: COVIDCMG@mcmaster.ca to arrange enhanced cleaning. NOTES: Please do not include personal details about the individual (e.g., name or employee ID); the space may need to be shut down for a period of time until cleaning is completed.
Return to the Workplace

Supervisor Responsibilities following a COVID-19 related absence

NOTE: Medical clearance needs to be provided to the McMaster Occupational Health Nurse prior to returning to work.

1. Faculty/staff must be cleared to return to work by the McMaster Occupational Health Nurse(s) for COVID-19 related absences. This includes those with symptoms of COVID-19, awaiting test results, travel or close physical contact related isolation, and positive tests for COVID-19. Depending on the situation, the individual needs to be asymptomatic and have completed the 14-day isolation period and/or had a negative test result, or medical note.

2. Prior to the individual’s return to work following such an absence, advise them to contact the McMaster Occupational Health Nurses and to provide the documentation as set out in their responsibilities above.

3. The McMaster Occupational Health Nurse will notify the supervisor when appropriate medical documentation has been received and the date the individual is cleared to return to work.

Notification

Will students, faculty or staff be notified by the university if someone is positive for COVID-19 and they were on-site at the same time?

When the University is notified that a student, faculty or staff member is experiencing medical symptoms, cleaning and disinfection of the affected area will be completed in compliance with public health guidelines. This will be done even if the individual has not tested positive for COVID-19.

- All surfaces with which the individual has come into contact must be cleaned.
- Public areas where a symptomatic person has passed through and spent minimal time (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with bodily fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.
- A prompt and enhanced cleaning of the work area will be completed as soon possible when McMaster is advised of medical symptoms.

Note: the affected space (not the entire building) may need to be shut down for a period of time until cleaning is completed.

Please note that the university must respect the privacy of individuals who are being tested or who have tested positive for COVID-19 and ensure that this information is kept confidential.
Managers, academic administrators including deans and chairs, and unit heads should not send any messaging to faculty members, librarians, staff, students or others about suspected or confirmed cases. If you have questions regarding appropriate messaging about COVID-19, please contact the Rapid Response Team via email: COVIDCMG@mcmaster.ca

In regard to the notification of others, the university follows the direction provided by Hamilton Public Health. If Public Health determines that there is a health and safety risk on campus due to a positive case, the University would be provided with directives and the appropriate steps would be taken. Public Health is responsible for contact tracing and would contact directly any individuals deemed to be at risk.

Should a member of the McMaster community test positive for COVID-19, Public Health will do contact tracing to identify individuals that may have been in close contact and may be at risk. Public Health will contact those individuals directly.

In the event of a positive test results, faculty, staff and students should all be vigilant and continue to self-monitor for symptoms using the Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool. As the laboratory testing capacity has increased, additional testing is available for those that are having even mild symptoms or those that are asymptomatic but are concerned about COVID-19 exposure or are essential workers. Individuals can contact their local Public Health unit for details and to arrange testing as needed.