Supervisor Step-by-Step Guide:
When an Employee May Have Been Exposed to COVID-19

The Supervisor Guide refers to impact to pay and employment duties when an employee may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Below is a scenario supervisors may encounter, along with recommended step by step guidelines to respond, based on information currently available from Public Health.

1. Potential Exposure to COVID-19
2. Preventative Measures

1. Potential Exposure to COVID-19
When a supervisor is informed that an employee feels they have been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms related to COVID-19, it is recommended that the supervisor take the following steps:

a) If the employee is in the workplace at the time the supervisor should ask the employee to go home and to seek appropriate medical advice.

b) Advise the employee to contact Public Health and follow their direction.

c) Approve the employee’s leave of absence. As per Supervisor Guide, the following applies:

- Advise the employee to follow self-isolation instructions and ask them not to come to campus during the period of self-isolation.

- Faculty and staff are expected to continue to work while in self-isolation, although they should not physically attend work. Consider whether alternative working arrangements are possible during this period. For example:
  - working from home arrangements
  - leveraging technology, such as Zoom meeting, WebEx, MS Teams
  - assigning project work

- Only if alternative working arrangements are not possible, the supervisor will approve the employee’s leave of absence. In such case, and provided the employee has followed the advice of McMaster University, Public Health, and Global Affairs relating to relevant preventative measures such as travel advisories, the following will apply:
i. Employees who have sick leave/salary continuance benefits normally available to them, pursuant to their collective agreement or employment contract, will be eligible to draw on those benefits while they are in self-isolation in accordance with advice from Public Health.

ii. With the exception of those on interim (temporary and casual) employment contracts, employees who do not have sick leave/salary continuance benefits normally available to them pursuant to their collective agreement or employment contract, or those who have otherwise exhausted such benefits, will experience no loss of pay while they are in self-isolation in accordance with advice from Public Health, even if they are not sick. Such continued compensation will be based on the employee’s regular schedule or established stipend payment.

iii. Individuals who do not follow the guidance provided by McMaster University, Public Health, or Global Affairs may not be eligible for pay should they be required to self-isolate or are not able to return as expected from travel. If alternate work arrangements are not possible, the individual will be able access unused vacation time, other banked time, or the absence will be treated as an unpaid personal leave.

\[d\) Notify the University’s Occupational Health Nurse\]

Notify the University’s Occupational Health Nurse, Rachael Byrne, via email at byrner1@mcmaster.ca for University tracking purposes, and provide the following information:

- Name of employee,
- Department name,
- Physical work location of employee (including building name, office number), and
- Date that employee received confirmation of positive case of COVID-19 by Public Health, if known.

The University will soon have an online reporting tool available for this purpose. Once that is available, the above email will not be required.

\[e\) Request cleaning of work area\]

Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the employee has come into contact with must be cleaned.

Public areas where a symptomatic person has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

Supervisors must request a prompt and enhanced cleaning of the work area.

a. For the Health Sciences Centre (located within MUMC), please contact the Faculty of Health Sciences Corporate Services Office at either
pentlit@mcmaster.ca or healeyd@mcmaster.ca for additional cleaning services.

b. For central campus locations with the exception of the Health Sciences Centre, contact Facility Services at ext. 24740 and provide the following information:
   - Department Name
   - Physical work location of employee (including building name, office number)

c. For locations other than those in a) and b) above, contact your building cleaners, or contact Facility Services at ext. 24740.

f) **Information Sharing**

Public Health actively engages in contact tracing and case management to identify and contact anyone who came into direct contact with the individual. Public Health may be in contact with you or employees directly.

g) **Follow Public Health Directives**

When there is a positive case of COVID-19, Public Health actively engages in contact tracing and case management to identify and contact anyone who came into direct contact with the individual. They may be in contact with others in the workplace, supervisors are to follow any direction from Public Health and ensure employees are provided with adequate workplace supports.

2. **Preventative Measures**

Supervisors are asked to follow recommendations outlined in the [Supervisor Guide](#) with respect to critical business operations and addressing questions from employees. Even with no known exposure, employees should always be vigilant and self-monitor for symptoms during a pandemic.

Encourage and support key preventative measures including social distancing, staying home when ill, frequent hand hygiene, and cough and sneeze etiquette

**Social distancing**

Social distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. This means making changes in your everyday routines to minimize close contact with others, including:

- avoiding non-essential gatherings
- avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
- avoiding crowded places
- limiting contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
- keeping a distance of at least 2 arms-length (approximately 2 metres) from others