



# TOWN OF ARLINGTON

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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### COVID-19 Protocols

Updated November 2, 2023

Fellow Town Employees:

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing with an update on our COVID-19 protocols for the Fall of 2023. These guidelines are consistent with the latest guidance from the MA Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control. Similar to last year, the focus as we head into the cooler weather will be on symptomatic individuals.

The Town's plan will include the following components:

#### Testing

- Employees are requested to test if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Rapid antigen testing is preferred to a PCR test in most situations.
- Symptomatic employees can remain at work if they have mild symptoms and test *negative*. Individuals will wear a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved. DPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative.

#### Exposure Precautions

- **\*\*People with Covid-19 are most able to spread it to others during the first 5 days of their infection but can also spread it up to 2 days before symptom onset or their positive test and for about 10 days after their positive test. If you were exposed to someone during this time frame, especially if you spent over 15 minutes in close proximity to them, or doing activities that involved singing or shouting, you may have been exposed to Covid-19. Even if you were around a person for a shorter time frame, you should consider yourself an exposure, especially if you had direct contact with the respiratory droplets of that person (e.g. being coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing a mask or face covering. Employees exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic, regardless of their vaccination status.**
- Employees who have been exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must wear a mask any time they are around others indoors for the 10 days following the exposure, unless they are unable to wear a mask.
- Employees who were exposed and develop symptoms at any time should isolate and take a test. If the result is positive, the employee must follow isolation protocols.
- Employees who test negative or have remained asymptomatic, should take a test on Day 6.
  - Individuals who have had COVID-19 in the last 30 days are not recommended to test on Day 6 but should use a rapid antigen test if they develop any symptoms.
- Note: Day 0 is the day of your last exposure to someone with Covid-19 (CDC)

## Isolation

- COVID-19 Employees that test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must isolate. Isolation means the person must be alone, without direct contact with anyone else, until they can no longer spread the virus.
- The isolation period must last a minimum of 5 full days. If the employee symptoms are not resolving on Day 6, then the employee should continue to isolate until their symptoms are resolving or through Day 10.
- After isolation has ended, if COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart the isolation at Day 0
- Note: Individual with symptoms: Day 0 is the day of isolation is the day of symptom onset regardless of when the individual tests positive.
- Note: Individual without symptoms: Day 0 is the day the individual tested positive

## Returning to work

- Employees may return to work according to the following conditions:  
Able to wear a mask:
  - Employees may return on Day 6, if the employee has not had any symptoms or they have been fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours AND their other symptoms are improving.
  - Employee must wear a well-fitting mask covering their nose and mouth at all times when they are around other people from Day 6-10. The mask may be removed prior to Day 11, if the employee has had two negative tests taken 48 hours apart.

Unable to wear a mask:

- Stay home and isolate for 10 days;
- If the individual never had symptoms or symptoms are improving, you may end your isolation on Day 11.
- **Note: Day 0 is the day your symptoms first began or the day you tested positive if you were asymptomatic.**

If you were severely ill (were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system, you should consult your healthcare provider before leaving isolation.

## Reporting Test Results

- Test results should be reported directly to the department head, either by phone or email
  - Please report all **positive** test results;
  - Employees should also report negative results of follow-up testing for symptomatic individuals after 48 hours;
  - Employees should also report two negative results on Day 5 or later after a positive COVID case to return and if they want to test out of the mask requirement.

## Masks

- Any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those with higher risks from COVID-19, will be supported in that choice;
- Harassment of individuals who continue to mask is strictly prohibited;
- When masking is required it is requested employees wear an N95 or KN95 mask;
- Employees will be required to provide their own masks.

### COVID-19 Symptoms

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills</li><li>• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath</li><li>• New loss of taste or smell</li><li>• Muscle aches or body aches</li><li>• Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sore throat, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i></li><li>• Nausea, vomiting, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i></li><li>• Headache, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i></li><li>• Fatigue, <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i></li><li>• Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies), <i>when in combination with other symptoms</i></li></ul> |
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All individuals are encouraged to stay up-to-date with vaccination as vaccines remain the best way to help protect yourself and others. The Town will be partnering with local pharmacies to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics and Flu vaccine clinics.

The Town will continue to monitor COVID-19 transmission and reserves the right to make changes to this policy to protect the health, safety and well-being of our Employees.

For questions, please reach out to Caryn Malloy Director of Human Resources or Natasha Waden Director of Public Health.