



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 14, 2020

### **FAQ for Employers/Businesses re: Positive COVID Test Results**

As the islands enter the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the COVID crisis, the likelihood of local families, individuals, and businesses being connected to someone with a confirmed positive test result continues to increase.

We created this FAQ to highlight answers to likely questions in the event of a positive test result in either an employee, or a close contact of an employee.

#### **How will I know if an employee has tested positive?**

If the San Juan County Health & Community Services surveillance team determines that there has been close contact between an individual who has tested positive and the staff or patrons of a business, the business owner or manager will be contacted by public health staff.

In some cases, an employee may notify an employer directly. If at that time there has been no communication between the employer and the public health team, the employer should call the County COVID Hotline at 360-370-7500. If an employee tests positive they will be required to self-isolate at home and will not be available to work.

#### **What exactly is a “close contact”?**

A close contact is defined as someone who has had interaction with an individual with a confirmed positive test result for more 15 minutes of time and within 6 feet or less of distance.

#### **If I have an employee who tested positive, should I close my business?**

There are too many variables and situations for a one size to fits all answer. This should be a decision made in cooperation with the County Health team, including the County Health Officer. However, in many cases a business doesn't need to close unless there is evidence of an outbreak (2 or more cases) associated with the business.

#### **Will a business be notified if one of their employees is a close contact of a positive individual?**

In most cases, no. While close contacts will be asked to quarantine and be tested, protocol does not suggest quarantining or testing of contacts of close contacts. Clearly potential future test results from close contacts may require further action. There may be circumstances where contact is so close or so prolonged that more follow-up is required (in which case, you will be contacted by the County Health team).

#### **What if a customer tests positive?**

This very much depends on the nature of the interaction and layout of the business. Any decisions about actions to take should be made in cooperation with the County Health team. Some circumstances may require action, but many will not.

**Should I notify the Health Department if a customer lets me know they tested positive?**

Yes. You should call the County COVID Hotline at 360-370-7500.

**How do I protect my staff and customers, whether there is a positive case or not?**

- Disciplined, proper wearing of face coverings for both staff and customers.
- Using outdoor space for meetings or other interactions whenever possible.
- Frequent washing of hands. Ensure adequate ability to do so, for both customers and staff.
- Work to minimize the number of staff in a vehicle at any one time. Face coverings for all.
- Maximize ventilation. Open windows, keep air moving, use air filtration and exchange systems.
- Keep space clean with regular wiping and sanitizing of commonly touched shared surfaces or tools.
- Ensure employees self-monitor for symptoms and don't come to work if sick.
- If they do have symptoms, staff should contact their medical provider about being tested.
- If they are tested, stay home until negative test results are in.
- Encourage tele-working whenever possible.
- Keep coworkers more than six feet apart, whenever possible.
- Follow all industry [specific guidance from Governor](#), including [developing a safety plan](#).

**What else do I need to know?**

In a small community information and news spreads quickly. So quickly that often accuracy or truthfulness is sacrificed. When positive test results occur, we ask that everyone work to avoid speculation, judgment, and rumor sharing. Only pass on or react to info that is verified. Positive COVID cases are a fact of life until a vaccine is widely available, and while doing everything we can to minimize spread is critical, it is also important to stay calm, thoughtful, and focused on the things we can control.