

Frequently Asked Questions

Tenants/Landlords, Employees/Employers & Schools/Daycare

Tenants/Landlords

Q. One of my tenants tested positive/is being tested for COVID-19. Can you verify that this person tested positive?

A. If you are concerned about a sick tenant, it is best to contact them to offer support. The Health Department can neither confirm nor deny any individual's testing status.

Q. Do I notify my other tenants?

A. There is community-based spread of coronavirus, so we should each behave as though every person is potentially a carrier of the disease, even if not showing symptoms. Remind all tenants to remain in their units unless absolutely necessary and maintain distances of at least 6 feet from one another when passing in halls or lobby. Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces such as elevator buttons and door handles. Some posters you could place in your building are available from the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>

Q. Do I need to do a deep clean? If so, how?

A. If someone in your building is sick:

- **Close off common areas** used by the sick person.
- **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area. **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the sick person**, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines. Focus especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting are available from CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>. Note recommended use of an EPA-registered household disinfectant <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. Follow label instructions.

Q. Can the Health Department help me find a company to clean my facility?

A. No, the Health Department does not recommend private businesses for cleaning.

Employees/Employers:

Q. My company is not practicing social distancing or cleaning the premises properly. What can I do?

A. Stress to your manager, or your human resources department, the need for steps to minimize the risk of transmission among employees and maintain healthy business operations and a healthy work environment. You can point them to this CDC resource

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Q. My company has allowed an employee who recently visited a foreign country to work. What can I do?

A. Make sure your management, or human resources department, is aware that anyone who has traveled internationally in the past 14 days should stay home and monitor their health

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

Q. I heard some people at XX business have tested positive for the coronavirus. Why is it not being reported and why are they not shutting down?

A. In our current environment there is great potential for rumors. Focus on information from trusted sources. Upon notification of a positive test for coronavirus by a testing laboratory, the health department of the individual's county of residence will interview the person and those who might have had close contact with them to provide information regarding self-isolation and monitoring of symptoms or other steps as appropriate. A decision to close an essential business will be based on multiple factors including the ability to carry on work with social distancing and other measures to minimize risk to employees and the community.

Q. One of my employees tested positive/is being tested for COVID-19. Can you verify this person's status?

A. The Health Department can neither confirm nor deny any individual's testing status. When notified of a positive test for COVID-19 through laboratory electronic reporting, health department staff seek to contact the person who tested positive as soon as possible to interview them about their recent activities and close contacts. Depending upon their findings, the health department may reach out to those who might have had close contact with them to provide information regarding self-isolation and monitoring of symptoms or other steps as appropriate. While positive cases can usually be reached within a few hours, it can more difficult to reach those who are hospitalized. There are several reasons why the Howard County Health Department may not reach out in a given instance: 1. Person lives outside of Howard County. HCHD is only notified of positive tests for residents of Howard County. 2. Person is positive, but the result hasn't come into the electronic system yet. (There can be a few-hours lag.) 3. Person was tested, but specimen has not been processed by lab yet. (This can

take several days.) In addition, it is not necessary or feasible to notify any and all individuals who may have had indirect, passing or casual contact with an infected individual. Those who become aware of an unspecific or unidentified exposure should follow all the recommended hygiene precautions and monitor themselves for signs of illness.

Q. What should I do if an employee is sick with COVID-like symptoms?

A. Any employee who has symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should stay home and follow CDC-recommended steps to limit spread to their household and community. Make sure that you are managing your business to minimize risk of disease transmission among employees with social distancing and regular cleaning <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Q. Do I notify my other employees? If so, how?

A. Notifying other employees will depend on guidance from the Health Department. The Health Department will contact the person that tested positive and will contact those that are possible contacts.

Q. Do I need to do a deep clean? If so, how?

A. There is community-based spread of coronavirus so we should each behave as though every person is potentially a carrier of the disease, even if not showing symptoms. Regular cleaning is important. CDC provides guidance on cleaning, including when an employee is sick <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Q. Can the Health Department help me find a company to clean my facility?

A. No, the Health Department does not recommend private businesses for cleaning.

Q. One of my employees says they have recovered from COVID-19 and wants to return to work. When is that OK?

A. Employees should not return to work until the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation are met <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>, and in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. There are special criteria for Healthcare personnel <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html#practices-restrictions>

Schools/Daycares

Q. One of my students/staff tested positive/is being tested for COVID-19. Can you verify their status?

A. The Health Department can neither confirm nor deny any individual's testing status.

Q. Do I notify my other employees? If so, how?

A. Notifying other employees will depend on guidance from the Health Department. Depending upon their findings, the health department may reach out to those who might have had close contact with them to provide information regarding self-isolation and monitoring of symptoms or other steps as appropriate. In addition, it is not necessary or feasible to notify any and all individuals who may have had indirect, passing or casual contact with an infected individual. Because there is now community spread of the virus, all of us should consider ourselves at heightened risk of transmission from anyone with whom we have close contact.

Q. Do I need to do a deep clean? If so, how?

A. At this point there is community-based spread of coronavirus. We should each behave as though every person is potentially a carrier of the disease, even if not showing symptoms. CDC provides guidance on cleaning, including when an employee is sick

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Q. Can the Health Department help me find a company to clean my facility?

A. No, the Health Department does not recommend private businesses for cleaning.