

If an Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19: Communication is Key

During these challenging times, uncertainty can be a source of anxiety. So, if you have a confirmed COVID-19 case at work, be sure to clearly communicate the situation and the solutions your business will take to address it.



COMMUNICATION IS KEY CHECKLIST:

- ☐ This is a vulnerable time for the affected employee. Be understanding, listen, and reassure them that they have your support.

"I know this is a scary situation. I want you to take care of your health first. We'll figure out your work situation as this develops. You have our support, and be assured that your identity will remain confidential."

- ☐ Ask the positive-test employee to make a list of co-workers, clients, or vendors they've come in close contact with (within 6 feet) for extended periods (between 10-30 minutes) in the last 14 days. Communicate the potential exposure to these contacts, but **DO NOT identify the employee to protect their privacy, as required under various federal and state laws.**

"We regret to inform you that a co-worker has just tested positive for COVID-19. They have identified you as someone they may have had close contact with in the past 14 days. For your safety and the safety of others, please go home immediately to self-isolate, consult your doctor, and monitor your symptoms. We understand this is a difficult situation. We will continue to keep you updated as we learn more."

- ☐ Communicate the illness to any remaining employees while keeping the affected employee(s) confidential. Calm fears and be understanding. When in doubt, simply stick to the facts.

"We regret to inform you that a co-worker has tested positive for COVID-19 on (date) and is now self-isolating. Close contacts have been notified and were also asked to self-isolate. Due to privacy laws, we are unable to identify the affected co-workers. We will be taking steps to disinfect all areas and minimize further risk, so our offices will be closing from (date) to (date). Please consult your manager for further instructions. Please consult your doctor if you have questions about COVID-19 or visit the CDC website at cdc.gov/coronavirus or State of Hawai'i Department of Health at health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019. Your safety is our priority, and we're here to support you during this difficult time. If you have questions or concerns, please contact (HR contact)."

Questions?

Call our team at **(808) 791-4900**.

This material is provided for informational purposes only and does not include state or local guidance related to COVID-19. In addition, it should not be used as legal or medical advice. Please consult a legal or medical professional for further advice.