



TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

COVID & EMPLOYEES – RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

The goal of the Town of Brookline as an employer is to provide a safe work environment and having a strong process in place for when employees are exposed to someone who is COVID positive, presumed positive, or becomes ill. The CDC, the Commonwealth and Brookline Public Health have provided guidelines and processes which are incorporated into the information below. Town services have never been closed, but we have been working differently.

Prevention

What Are We Doing? In the physical space, the Town provides regular and deep cleaning of work spaces, has installed plexi barriers and partitions where possible, HVAC has been inspected and adjusted to run external air flow 24/7, installed more hand sanitizer stations, adapted water fountains to only fill water bottles, adapted bathroom hand driers to use paper towels, and adapted work spaces to use conference rooms to distance employees. For employees, the Town has adjusted work hours and schedules and have used options of work from home where roles permit.

As the Town offices prepare for formal re-opening of buildings to the public, we are taking the same amount of care to keep both the public and the employees safe.

What Can Employees Do? Employees are asked to review the Self Certification at home before coming to work. Do you have a temperature over 100F or 37.7C? Do you have other traditional symptoms associated with COVID-19 – (Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea)

Have you been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID? Have you been instructed to quarantine or isolate? Do you feel healthy? If not, stay home, contact supervisor and HR and then contact medical professional.

When they get to work, employees are asked to review the Self -Certification again and take their temperature and sign off either on paper or electronically. If they cannot self-certify, then leave immediately, contact supervisor, HR and then medical professional.

In either case, employees are NOT CLEARED TO WORK unless and until they are cleared to return by HR and Public Health.

In the office, wear a face covering or face shield over your nose and mouth when you are in common spaces, moving around the building and when you cannot socially distance. Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer often. Keep your distance from others even when talking with a mask on. Call ahead when going to another department, to check that there is enough capacity in the office.

Exposure to COVID Positive, Presumed Positive, or Testing COVID Positive

The Town has a defined process in place when employees might be exposed to someone who has tested positive, presumed positive or if an employee themselves test positive which follow CDC and Public Health guidelines. The Town's response balances the employee's privacy rights with the other employees' health and safety. When an instance occurs, either the exposed individual or the potentially positive employee is instructed to leave the workplace, inform their supervisor and HR as soon as possible. If the exposed or potentially positive employee has not been in contact with a medical professional already, they are encouraged to do so.

Human Resources contacts the employee in collaboration with Public Health to determine when the person was in the office and where in the building(s) they were, who they interacted with. "Exposure" requiring quarantine of fellow employees would include the interaction with the individual employee at a distance of six (6) feet or less for more than 10-15 minutes, where the individual employee did not have a face covering on. Where there is lack of clarity on timing or dates of interactions use of face coverings, employees will be quarantined for their own safety. Exposure does NOT include an employee who interacted with another employee who interacted with the individual employee (secondary contact). Exposure does NOT include passing in the stairwell or hallway.

Human Resources then contacts Public Health and the Town Administrator's Office to notify of instance, Buildings for scheduling cleaning of office spaces and public access locations, the appropriate department heads and affected employees to send those employees home for quarantine.

Human Resources gathers details on specific employee and other affected employees on residential location (for possible local contact tracing). Information is also forwarded to Public Health. Human Resources Leave and Disability Specialist coordinates communications with affected employees during quarantine and isolation.

As quarantine and isolation time passes, employees who are looking to return to work must contact HR with information, test results, and any local authorization to return to work. Final authorization to return to work for the Town is done by Human Resources in coordination with Public Health. No one can return to work until authorized by Human Resources in coordination with Brookline Public Health.

Communications

While the Town of Brookline cannot prohibit employees from discussing the details of a COVID positive instance in the workplace, we do urge employees to respect employee privacy. Human Resources coordinates communications with the employee and any affected employees, the supervisors and department heads in coordination with the Director of Public Health. Employees' point of contact for discussion of health information is Human Resources. When an instance of an employee testing positive or presumed positive occurs, Human Resources will contact all department heads to inform them of the occurrence of an instance in the building as well as the implementation of cleaning, quarantine and isolation protocols. Department heads and Human Resources will be the main point of contact for employees outside the affected department(s).

Use of Time – Quarantine, Isolation, Illness, Vacation

Employees have access to recently adopted federal leave benefits for COVID-19 related issues. Individuals who are sent home to quarantine as a result of exposure to a fellow employee at work can work from home if work is available and their role provides for work from home. Otherwise, the employee will be paid under Paid Administrative Leave. Individual employees who have tested positive or who have to quarantine or isolate due to community exposure have access to Federal Paid Sick Leave (See COVID Leave Policy and Forms).

Related: Under the Governor's Travel Order and have traveled to a High Risk location and those who have not received their negative PCR COVID test have access to Federal Paid Sick Leave (prior authorization for travel is required). There are additional reasons to access newly adopted federal Leave time, please see COVID Leave Policy and Forms.

Questions, Contact HR at HRCOVID19@brooklinema.gov