Guidance for Daily COVID-19 Screening of Staff and Visitors

The Washington State Department of Health recommends that employers use the information in this guidance to screen staff and visitors (excluding customers in retail) at the beginning of each shift or visit to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What is screening?

Screening employees is a strategy that employers can use to lessen the chance of allowing COVID-19 infected people into the workplace. Screening will not identify people who have been exposed but are not yet showing symptoms (incubating) or who are infected but asymptomatic. Infection prevention in the workplace is an important component to prevent workplace transmission of COVID-19.

Who should be screened?

Screen employees and visitors who enter the workplace. This does not include customers who are in a public-facing area (for example, restaurant or supermarket patrons).

When should a business screen employees and visitors?

Screen employees and visitors at the start of every shift or visit.

How should a business set up screening?

- If implementing in-person health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully. Employers may use social distancing, barriers or partition, or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the screener. However, reliance on PPE alone is a less effective control and is more difficult to implement, given PPE shortages and training requirements.
- Ensure any screening materials are provided in languages that employees understand.
- Complete the health checks in a way that helps maintain social distancing guidelines, such as providing multiple screening entries into the building.
- To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, make employee health screenings as private as possible. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of everyone’s medical status and history.
- Follow guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding confidentiality of medical records from health checks.
- Document these daily temperature, symptoms, and exposure checks.

How to screen for COVID-19
Ask the following questions.

1. Have you had contact with anyone that you know has been diagnosed with COVID-19? Contact is defined as being within 6 feet (2 meters) for more than 15 minutes with a person, or having direct contact with infectious fluids from a person with confirmed COVID-19 (for example being coughed or sneezed on).

2. Have you had a positive-COVID test for active virus in the past 10 days?

3. Do you have of these symptoms that you cannot attribute to another condition?
   - Fever or chills
   - Cough
   - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
   - Fatigue
   - Muscle or body aches
   - Headache
   - Recent onset of loss of taste or smell
   - Sore throat
   - Congestion
   - Nausea or vomiting
   - Diarrhea

What should a business do if an employee or answers “yes” to these questions?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, employers should:

- Not let the staff or visitor enter the workplace.
- Immediately separate the employee from other people and arrange transport for home or to a medical facility if indicated.
- Strongly recommend timely testing. If they had close contact with a person with COVID-19, Employees should be tested no sooner than 48 hours after exposure. If the employee does not have a doctor or healthcare provider: free or low-cost testing is available at several locations to anyone, regardless of immigration status.
  
  [https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/TestingSiteOnlineResources-LHJ.pdf]

- Not have the employee return to work until the person completed their quarantine or isolation period. Certain essential workers may be allowed to work with specific restrictions.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the current COVID-19 situation in Washington, Governor Inslee’s proclamations, symptoms, how it spreads, and how and when people should get tested. See our Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

A person’s race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19- this is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Share
accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19)
- WA State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)
- Find Your Local Health Department or District
- CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Stigma Reduction Resources

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: 1-800-525-0127, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Weekends: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, press # when they answer and say your language. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.