



Managing Outbreaks/Multiple Infections of COVID-19

Issued: 1/27/2021

Revised: 11/23/2021, 5/24/2022, 7/25/2022, 2/27/2023, 7/14/23, 8/9/24

Latest Revision: 10/22/2024

10/22/2024 Revision

Effective 10/16/2024, the San Francisco Department of Public Health Order No. 2023-02 requiring COVID-19 vaccination of personnel in healthcare settings has been rescinded. COVID-19 vaccinations are encouraged but not required.

Overview

Cal/OSHA's Covid-19 Prevention non-emergency regulations currently in effect until February 2025 require employers to take specific steps when there are multiple COVID-19 cases in an exposed workplace. This includes offering testing to employees, and identifying and correcting factors that may have contributed to the outbreak. Reporting to local public health departments is no longer required. However, City departments are still required to report outbreaks to DHR.

What is an “outbreak”?

An “outbreak” is defined as three or more COVID-19 cases in an “exposed workplace” within a 7-day period.

How long is an outbreak?

An outbreak is at least 14 days. A rolling 14-day period begins from the date when the third known COVID-19 individual first entered the worksite while in their infectious period. The outbreak is over when there are **one or fewer new COVID-19** cases detected in the exposed workplace for a 14-day period.

What is a “major outbreak”?

A “major outbreak” is defined as 20 or more COVID-19 cases in the exposed workplace within a 30-day period. The major outbreak is over when there are fewer than three COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed workplace over a 14-day period.

What is an “exposed workplace” for purposes of outbreaks?

An “exposed workplace” is defined by Cal/OSHA regulations as any work location, working area, or common area at work used or accessed by an individual with COVID-19 during the infectious period, which may include bathrooms, walkways, hallways, aisles, break or eating areas, and waiting areas. It does not include areas where employees momentarily pass through without interacting or congregating with each other.

What is “close contact” in an exposed workplace?

“Close contact” is defined as sharing the same indoor airspace with a COVID-19 positive individual for greater than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, during the COVID-19 individual’s infectious period (i.e., 24 hours prior to development of symptoms). For employees who are in larger indoor airspaces (i.e., greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor): close contact means being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while the person is in their infectious period.

What is a “high-risk exposure period”?

A “high-risk exposure period” is from one day before the COVID-19 positive individual symptoms first appeared until their symptoms improved. If the individual is asymptomatic, there is no high-risk exposure period, and employees are able to continue working.

Masking and Testing Requirements

Requirements for the duration of masking and the frequency of COVID-19 testing depend on the level of outbreak in the workplace and remain in effect until the outbreak is resolved. However, in all instances of an outbreak, masking and testing is required for at least 14 days.

Exposure Type	Face Masking	COVID-19 Testing (ideally Rapid Antigen test)
Close Contact in Outbreak	Required >14 days	Required once between day 3-5, then weekly
Close Contact in Major Outbreak	Required >14 days	Required once between day 3-5, then twice weekly
COVID-19 infection in <30 days	Required >14 days	No testing, unless symptoms

Procedures for Managing an Outbreak

1. Until the outbreak is concluded, employees in an exposed workgroup:
 - a. Must wear a well-fitted mask indoors, and outdoors when working closer than 6 feet to others;
 - b. May request access to a N95 respirator from their department;
 - c. Must continue to mask until there are one or fewer new cases for 14 consecutive days, and the workplace is no longer considered to be in outbreak status; and
 - d. Must test (unless exempted) once between day 3-5 and weekly thereafter until the outbreak is resolved. Employees are exempt from testing when they have had a confirmed COVID-19 illness in the last 30 days and do not have symptoms.
2. Departments must:
 - a. Ensure that employees who were identified as part of the exposed workgroup test weekly until 14 days have passed with one or fewer new COVID-19 cases; exempting those who have

had a confirmed COVID-19 infection within the last 30 days and do not currently have symptoms.

- b. Provide home test kits to employees.
- c. Investigate and implement, where possible, other precautions to reduce transmission, including physical distancing, additional telecommuting, or other environmental controls.
- d. Support good hygiene, such as hand washing.
- e. Track the number of COVID-19 positive individuals until 14 days have passed with one or fewer new cases.
- f. Exclude from the workplace any employees who do not comply with required initial testing between days 3 and 5 of the outbreak, until the outbreak is over. Non-compliance with this required surveillance testing may require disciplinary action.

Procedures for Managing a Major Outbreak

Follow procedures above for multiple infections AND:

1. Require testing **twice weekly** until there are fewer than three COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed workplace for a 14-day period; then COVID-19 testing can be done on a weekly basis until the outbreak is resolved;
2. Re-implement 6-foot physical distancing where feasible;
3. Reduce the number of persons in an area at one time, including visitors, where possible.

Procedures for Reporting an Outbreak

1. Notify DHR within one business day or 48 hours, whichever is later, after learning of the outbreak by emailing: fiona.wilson@sfgov.org. DHR will need the following information on the COVID-19 positive individual(s) and where they were working to meet state labor code requirements:
 - a. Employee name
 - b. Date of symptom onset
 - c. Date of COVID-19 test
 - d. Contact information
 - e. Workplace location and address
 - f. Whether hospitalized or died (if known)
 - g. North American Industry Classification Code (NAIC) of the workplace (go to <https://www.naics.com/search/> to find the code)
2. Follow the protocols in the Workplace Contact Tracing Guidance issued by DHR at: <https://sfdhr.org/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19/Management-COVID-19-Workplace-Investigations-and-Staff-Notifications.pdf>
3. Investigate factors that contributed to the outbreak and what could be done to reduce exposure to COVID-19. Document the results and changes that will be implemented to prevent further occurrences. Add the changes to the COVID-19 section of your Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP). Changes may include, but are not limited to, moving indoor activities outdoors, increasing telecommuting, delaying non-essential work, increasing outdoor air supply or increasing

filtration systems for buildings where possible. For the Cal/OSHA Model Prevention Plan, go to: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/ETS.html>. For questions, contact Citywide Safety Officer, Tyler Nguyen, DHR Health and Safety Division (Tyler.Nguyen@sfgov.org).

Responding to Multiple Outbreaks in Exposed Workplaces at a Single Address

When three or more simultaneous outbreaks occur in different exposed workplaces at a single address (not exclusively a single department), DHR highly encourages temporary adoption of universal masking for all employees and departments in the common areas of the building until the outbreaks are resolved.

This recommendation includes all employees at a single address when in transit through the building and when using common areas including, but not limited to, bathrooms, conference rooms, hallways, elevators, and stairs. Unaffected work areas without outbreak status are not required to maintain masking if there is no outbreak specific to their workplace but are welcome to continue masking in their workplaces.

Employees are encouraged to take continued precautions of maintaining physical distancing and avoiding maskless exposures in crowded situations such as when on public transit. DHR will communicate when there are multiple outbreaks at a single address with the affected departments' DPOs, who in turn will communicate with their employees.