This communication was sent via global email to all Howard County employees on Monday, August 22, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

Dear Employees,

The CDC has updated their guidance for those individuals who may have been in direct contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19. Howard County Government is adopting those recommendations for managing employees who may test positive for COVID-19 or may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

The CDC continues to promote the importance of being up to date with your vaccination to protect people against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Protection provided by the current vaccine against symptomatic infection and transmission is less than that against severe disease and diminishes over time, especially against the currently circulating variants. For this reason, it is important to stay up to date, especially as new vaccines become available.

The CDC has updated its guidance for people who are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccines on what to do if exposed to someone with COVID-19. This is consistent with the existing guidance for people who are up to date on COVID-19 vaccines.

The CDC is recommending that instead of quarantining if you were exposed to COVID-19, you wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on day 5.

Regardless of vaccination status, you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19.

- You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results.
  - If your results are positive, follow CDC’s full isolation recommendations.
  - If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.

The CDC recommends that if you test positive for COVID-19, you stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home. You are likely most infectious during these first 5 days. Wear a high-quality mask when you must be around others at home and in public.
o If after 5 days you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication, and your symptoms are improving, or you never had symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5.

o Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11.

o You should wear a high-quality mask through day 10.

This CDC guidance applies to all of our general employees. The CDC has more stringent guidance for health care facilities, detention centers and congregant living centers.

County employees have been leaders in following the safety protocols and keeping each other safe throughout this pandemic. I ask you to continue to follow all of the protocols, stay home when you are sick, get tested when there is any question that you may have COVID-19 and following all of the CDC and local health department guidance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact John Peterson at X4439 or Jpeterson@howardcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive