



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Voice/Relay

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TO: Howard County Employees

FROM: Lonnie R. Robbins  
Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: COVID Responses

DATE: November 19, 2020

**This communication was sent via global email to all Howard County employees on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 12:25 p.m.**

Dear Employees,

With the recent rise in reported COVID cases, I want to remind everyone of our procedures related to positive COVID tests and COVID exposures. It is critical that everyone adhere to these procedures to keep our workplace, our employees, and the residents that we serve safe.

**Reporting to a Supervisor.** An employee **must** report to their supervisor if they test positive for COVID or if they have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines a close contact as someone with who you have been within six feet for 15 minutes or more.

**When to Quarantine for 14 days.** Employees who have been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID must quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with the COVID positive person. In accordance with CDC guidelines, this 14-day quarantine is in place whether or not the employee has a negative COVID test. The only exception to the 14-day quarantine is if the employee is released to return to work by their doctor or the health department.

Quarantine means that the employee is staying home and limiting contacts with other individuals. Employees on quarantine should not make any unnecessary trips outside of their home and should limit their contacts with other individuals, including other family members.

**Minimum Time Out of Work.** If an employee tests positive for COVID 19, the employee must remain out of work for at least 10 days after their positive test results **and** must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. The employee can return to work after both of these conditions are met.

**Notification of Identified Contacts.** When the County has been made aware that someone who tested positive for COVID has been in our work place, the County will seek to determine anyone with whom that person had close contact. The County will seek to notify those individuals with close contact and have them quarantine under the above requirements. The County will also send notification to the employees who may have been in the building or direct area of the COVID case even though those

employees who were not close contacts do not need to quarantine. The County will encourage all employees to get tested for COVID. The Health Department is responsible for all official contact tracing and will determine if there are additional requirements for quarantine or follow up.

**Other County Actions.** Depending on the site and the circumstances, the County may close certain facilities or have specific areas given additional cleaning in accordance with CDC guidelines.

**Use of Leave.** Employees who need to quarantine because of a positive COVID test or close contact with a person who tests positive for COVID, may use their sick leave or in the absence of sick leave, any other available leave. The County has opted out of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act for our employees who fall under the FFCRA Emergency Responder definition, but some employees may still be eligible for leave benefits under this Act. Application forms for leave under the Act are available from Human Resources and employees may contact HR for additional information.

Additionally, some employees may be granted administrative leave if they were sent home by their department as a result of a potential COVID case contraction at work. An employee on administrative leave must be available and able to be contacted by their department the same as if they were on work hours. Furthermore, employees on administrative leave for this purpose should not make any unnecessary trips outside of their home and should limit their contacts with other individuals, including other family members.

I appreciate your cooperation and your continued commitment to each other's safety while continuing with your important work. I am also deeply appreciative of the resilience of Howard County employees.

Lonnie R. Robbins  
Chief Administrative Officer  
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