

Draft Public Library Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19 Workplace Infection

Library COVID Response Overview Chart

Situation	Employee	Library Administration
Library employee feels ill	Stay home or immediately leave the library	Support the ill employee
Library employee is in close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID case	Quarantine for 10-14 days	Provide work-at-home opportunities if possible
Library employee is positive COVID case	Isolate until at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; at least 24 hours have passed since recovery (no fever without fever-reducing medications); and improvement of symptoms.	Notify staff, governing bodies of COVID positive employee. Determine staff close contact exposure. Determine necessary cleaning or closure of building

Core Beliefs

- Libraries care about the library staff and the patrons they serve.
- Libraries implement proactive strategies to support the safety of their community.
- Libraries collaborate with public health officials and other stakeholders during the pandemic.
- Libraries adapt in response to the virus itself, emerging science, best practices, and lessons learned from the library community.
- Libraries follow all applicable laws and agreements, including confidentiality guidelines.

Working policies

- Library staff are expected to follow all local laws and regulations, along with specific workplace rules, which include staying home when sick.
- Libraries support their staff who feel unwell and/or who are seeking medical advice.
- Libraries communicate with relevant staff if/when an employee has been directed to quarantine by the Maine CDC or their medical professionals.
- Libraries implement a multi-pronged approach if/when an employee or Maine CDC notifies them of a confirmed or probable case (see definitions) of COVID-19; this approach will likely include communication, compulsory telework, cleaning, and/or closure.
- Libraries follow advice from Maine CDC contact tracers.
- Libraries understand that providing service during the pandemic may require exceptions and nuanced approaches to workplace COVID infections.
- Libraries make COVID-19 workplace infection a priority and understand that time of action matters.

General Approach/Processes

1. Libraries follow both the Maine Library Commission's [Public Library Checklist Guidance](#) and State of Maine Guidance for [Public and Community Buildings](#).
2. The **Importance of Confidentiality**: Libraries understand the legal nuances of speaking with employees about matters of health and should handle COVID-19 in the workplace following standard human resources policies in place in the library's municipality or in the library's nonprofit institution.
The COVID positive employee has a right to privacy about his/her/their status. The employee should be referred to as the positive staff – no names or gender indicated. This is difficult in a small library setting and it is understandable that everyone may “know” who it is, but it is the responsibility of library leadership to keep names of COVID positive staff private.
Additional Resources:
EEOC Answers Employers' [COVID-19-Related Questions](#)
[Legal Guidance](#) on COVID-19 and FAQs
3. A plan and procedures are in place when/if a library employee becomes sick at work.
4. A plan and procedures are in place when the library is informed of a COVID positive employee (or household member) either by the employee or Maine CDC.

Circumstances and Procedures for COVID Positive/Probable or Sick Library Staff at Work

The library should develop a COVID infection plan and procedure and keep it readily available for the director and/or supervisors.

IF A LIBRARY EMPLOYEE IS SICK WITH COVID SYMPTOMS:

If or when an employee is feeling unwell (or an employee's doctor suggests they “stay home” or “quarantine” in anticipation of a test or test results), the employee should stay home or, if at work, go home **immediately** -- and should be instructed to NOT return to the library for any reason (not even to pick up work, a laptop, and/or personal items). The employee should notify the library director or appropriate HR contact for the library. The library director or HR contact should have the knowledge related to any health benefits and be able to communicate with employee on next steps, leave options, etc.).

The employee should seek medical advice and/or follow their medical provider's advice. Encourage the sick employee to get a COVID test. Testing locations are abundant in Maine and many are free and do not require permission from a doctor now. Information about COVID testing in Maine is at the [Keep Maine Healthy](#) webpage. The library director should make note the date of the onset of illness and staff who may have been in close contact.

Keep in mind that approximately 95% of those who take a test for COVID-19 do receive a negative result. ***The library does not need to take any formal action at this point.***

IF A LIBRARY EMPLOYEE MUST QUARANTINE

If an employee has been advised to quarantine by the Maine CDC or health care provider because he/she/they have been in close contact with a confirmed case, the employee should notify the library director or the library's designated HR contact regarding why they are absent from work. **They should not come into the library for any reason for at least 10 days.**

Because there has not been an official diagnosis of COVID-19, and because over 95% of those who test for COVID-19 receive a negative result, public health experts indicate that no other individuals in the library need to quarantine. **If the employee were to become a confirmed or probable case, the library will then need to take action.**

IF EMPLOYEE IS A CONFIRMED OR PROBABLE CASE OF COVID-19: If and/or when an employee notifies the library that they have tested positive for COVID-19 or meets the definition of a probable case (see definitions below), the employee should stay home -- and should be instructed to NOT return to the library for any reason (not even to pick up work, a laptop, and/or personal items). If the employee has been on-site within the last 10-14 days, the library director/HR designee needs to interview the COVID positive employee to identify contacts, date when last at work, etc. Then the library needs to quickly identify and notify close contacts while maintaining employee confidentiality and should take immediate action ahead of the Maine CDC's contact tracing efforts. This includes:

- Notify staff, town/city officials and/or governing board as well as [local/county health](#) or local emergency management officials of a COVID positive employee in the workplace.
- Identify close contacts of the infected employee.
- Have work-at-home process for some/all employees that may have been in close contact.
- Communicate COVID infection with the community and what the library's response is.
- Clean and/or close the library building.

From the current Maine CDC/DOE [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\) for Responding to a Positive Case in Schools](#):

"Maine CDC recommends testing for [all close contacts](#) of persons with SARS-CoV-2 infection 5-7 days after exposure. Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, it is important that close contacts of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection be quickly identified and tested in the appropriate time frame, even though close contacts must remain in quarantine for 10 days irrespective of the test result. In a school setting, close contacts may range from an entire classroom to the entire school, depending on the number and location of confirmed cases." (p. 3)

"The classroom where the confirmed case is located should be cleaned according to [federal CDC guidelines](#) (p. 4)

"Clean or leave classroom dormant for 7 days" (p. 6)

Note: Closing the library building for 7 days could be an alternative to incurring the cost of cleaning.

Isolation or Quarantine: What's the difference?

Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others (10-days).

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

Note: Current quarantine guidance was recently changed from 14 down to 10 days.

Current COVID Working definitions

Cleaning: Any cleaning prescribed for COVID-19 should be conducted by a licensed cleaning/custodial contractor, not by library staff. Look at the CDC's description [Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick](#) (scroll down).

Close contact: This is the term used by public health officials for an individual they determine to have met the threshold for quarantine. For COVID-19, the CDC defines a close contact as: **“Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person(s) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.”**

Closure: Upon a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 that requires cleaning (i.e. sick employee was last in the library within the last 7 calendar days), there is often an associated facilities closure to allow cleaning.

Contact: This term describes any employee who has had a known exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 in the workplace within the last 14 days during which parties were within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. It is advisable to send close contacts home in advance of the Maine CDC's official contact tracing efforts to determine *close* contacts to ensure safety of library staff and delays in test results and contact tracing. If the library can provide work at home for close contacts, that is preferable.

Interview: This is a voluntary conversation the library director/HR designee facilitates with a library employee who notifies the library of their diagnosis of COVID-19. The library administration uses information from the interview to determine any potential staff and/or any members of the public with whom employee might have had close contact.

Isolation: Isolation is directed by the Maine CDC upon a diagnosis of COVID-19. Per the CDC, “Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick and requires that anyone sick stay away from others, even in their own home.” Typically, someone in isolation sees no one else and stays behind closed doors. As part of contact tracing efforts, the Maine CDC orders isolation for anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and can take legal action if any individual fails to isolate. Generally, individuals self-isolate until at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, at least 24 hours have passed since recovery (no fever without fever-reducing medications), and improvement of symptoms. If ordered, the Maine CDC provides documentation affirming this requirement, which the individual can choose to provide to their employer.

Positive test / positive case / positive result(s): A laboratory PCR test confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. Results may take 3 days or more.

Probable case: This is an individual who has had an antigen positive test but **not** laboratory-confirmed molecular PCR test result showing the individual is positive for COVID-19. These are usually the Rapid Tests.

Quarantine: The Maine CDC directs individuals to quarantine upon determination that an individual is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19. Per the CDC: “Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.” Typically, the individual stays in their home, doesn't welcome visitors, and doesn't go into the public, but does

interact with other members of their own home for 14 days from the last exposure to COVID-19.” **A negative test result does not release an individual from quarantine.** The Maine CDC can provide documentation affirming its directive to quarantine, which the individual can choose to provide to their employer.

Seven calendar days: This is the generally accepted length of time the virus can survive without a live host, so is the threshold for whether cleaning must be conducted.