



To protect the health and safety of the SC Technical College System (SCTCS) community and prevent disease transmission, all members are strongly encouraged to adhere to the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) guidelines for [Protecting Yourself and Those Around You \(COVID-19\)](#). Recent studies indicate that people who are infected, but do not have symptoms, play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

The exposure protocols described in this document are established to ensure a consistent and effective response to potential and actual exposures for the purpose of minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 within the SCTCS work environment and is consistent with current guidelines from SC DHEC and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The information and guidance are based on the information currently available and are subject to the change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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DHEC DEFINITIONS

Close Contact –Someone who was within six (6) feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period from 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or specimen collection for an asymptomatic infected person) of the infected person.

Contact tracing – The practice of identifying, notifying and monitoring individuals who may have had close contact with a person determined to be a confirmed or probable case of an infectious disease as a means of controlling the spread of infection.

Physical Distancing - Physical distancing means staying home as much as possible, staying at least six (6) feet away from other people while in public, and avoiding gatherings where many people are present. Additionally, the CDC states that social distancing is “physical distancing,” and keeping a safe space (more than six (6) feet) between oneself and other people who are not from one’s household, in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Quarantine – Quarantine is used to separate people from others for a period of time to see if they become sick. This is a method to prevent the spread of disease.

Isolation - Is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. They must remain at home or the place they were told to isolate and avoid contact with other people until their isolation period is over. This includes avoiding contact with those in their household as much as possible.

WHAT STEPS TO TAKE FOR A POSSIBLE EXPOSURE OR CONFIRMED **COVID-19 ILLNESS** AS IT RELATES TO THE WORKPLACE

NOTIFICATION

The employee shall notify Human Resource Services when he or she:

1. tests for or is positive for COVID-19;
2. displays any of the known [symptoms](#) of COVID-19;
3. has been exposed to or had “close contact” with someone who has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19; and/or
4. has been exposed to or been in contact with someone who had “close contact” with someone who has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19.

UPDATED: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE

In general, people are considered [fully vaccinated](#):

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s [J&J]/Janssen vaccine.

If you don’t meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all [precautions](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

About the Delta Variant: Vaccines continue to reduce a person’s risk of contracting the virus that cause COVID-19, including this variant. Vaccines are highly effective against severe illness, but the [Delta variant](#) causes more infections and spreads faster than earlier forms of the virus that causes COVID-19.

RECENTLY UPDATED GUIDANCE FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) CONCERNING COVID-19:

Quarantine and Isolation for Fully Vaccinated Employees versus Unvaccinated Employees –

According to the CDC, fully vaccinated employees:

- » Who have direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 should get tested within three to five days following exposure (even if asymptomatic) and wear a mask indoors at work for 14 days following exposure or until the employee tests negative.
- » Who have direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 are NOT required to quarantine unless the employee tests positive for COVID.
- » Who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for 10 days.

According to the CDC, unvaccinated employees:

- » Who have direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days after exposure. The quarantine period may be shortened to seven days if the unvaccinated individual tests negative five days after exposure and remains symptom free.
- » Who are symptomatic and who test positive for COVID-19 can only return to work when ALL three of these conditions are met:
 - 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared.
 - They have been fever-free for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication.
 - Other symptoms of COVID-10 are improving.
- » Who are asymptomatic must quarantine for 10 days after a positive test result.



INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 SCENARIOS

The following DHEC guidance to determine the best practices to utilize in various scenarios involving COVID-19 in the workplace is as follows (In all instances, please contact Human Resource Services immediately.):

(A) **POSITIVE** – If an employee **tests positive** for COVID-19:

1. Tell employee to stay home and recommend they contact their healthcare provider if they have not already done so. If the employee is in the workplace when they are notified, the employee will be directed to leave the workplace immediately. Please ensure the employee is wearing a mask prior to exiting their office/workspace.
2. Human Resource Services will begin the process of gathering necessary information for contact tracing purposes and perform exposure assessment of coworkers and office/workspace.
3. Employee should remain out of work until they have recovered and met the criteria to return to work in accordance with the established guidance issued by the CDC and DHEC. CDC and DHEC have issued guidance on when a person may be considered recovered. The criteria below is used to determine eligibility to return to work.
 - a. 10 days have passed since their symptoms began, AND
 - b. They are free of fever ((100.4° F [38° C] or greater using an oral thermometer) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines, AND
 - c. Their other symptoms have improved.
4. Remove employees, if necessary, and isolate the impacted area where the infected employee worked. The area where the infected employee worked should be cleaned and disinfected if the employee was there while contagious (from 48 hours prior to symptom onset, or specimen collection if never symptomatic, to at least ten days after symptom onset of specimen collections). If possible, the area should be isolated for 24 hours prior to cleaning and disinfection. Human Resource Services will work in collaboration with Finance to request the services of company/vendor to provide cleaning and disinfection services for the infected workspace.

(B) **SICK BUT NO TEST** - Employee experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (either calls out sick or is at work when they begin experiencing symptoms):

The employee should be sent home and **encouraged** to get tested for COVID-19.

- i. If the employee **tests positive**, follow the steps outlined in **Section A**.
- ii. If the employee **tests negative**, and there is no known exposure to COVID-19, they may return to work when symptoms have resolved.
- iii. If the employee tests negative, and there is a possible exposure (not close contact, but other co-worker), employee may return to work when symptoms have resolved or if they have visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms.
- iv. If the employee does not get tested, the employee should remain out of work until they have recovered and met criteria for release from isolation as if they had **tested positive**.

- (C) **CLOSE CONTACT OF A CASE** - If an employee has been in close contact with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who **tests positive** for COVID-19:
1. If the employee is not fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or 2 weeks after single dose of Janssen vaccine), or the vaccination status is unknown, send employee home.
 2. The employee who is not fully vaccinated should self-quarantine and is encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms and at day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms though testing negative does not necessarily shorten the necessary quarantine period.
 3. If the employee volunteers to provide evidence that they are fully vaccinated, they do not need to be sent home immediately. Employees are encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms or at day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms. Employees should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
- (D) **CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE SICK (NO TEST)** - If an employee has been in close contact with someone (non-employee) or lives with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19:
1. Employee may remain at work, as long as they do not have symptoms while the ill person is tested and waiting for results.
 2. If the ill person **tests positive** for COVID-19:
 - i. Send employee home
 - ii. Follow the guidance outlined in **Section A**.
- (E) **CONTACT OF A CONTACT** – If an employee lives with someone who has been in close contact with someone who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 **or tests positive** for COVID-19:
1. The employee is considered a “contact of a contact.”
 2. Employee may remain at work as long as they do not have symptoms. They do **not** need to be tested unless they develop symptoms.
 3. If the person they live with or had close contact with develops symptoms, send the employee home until it can be determined whether the symptoms are due to COVID-19.
 - i. If the person they live with or had close contact with **tests negative** the employee may return to work.
 - ii. If the person they live with or had close contact with **tests positive** for COVID-19, send the employee home and follow the guidance for employees who are close contacts of a positive person as outlined in **Section A**.
 - iii. If the employee volunteers to provide evidence that they are fully vaccinated, they do not need to be sent home immediately. They should be encouraged to be tested at any time if they develop symptoms and at day 3-5 from exposure if they have no symptoms. They should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information regarding an impacted individual’s status, specifically as it relates to COVID-19, shall not be shared with anyone outside of Human Resource Services (beyond the extent necessary to adequately manage the case) to ensure strict confidentiality as required by federal and state law. Per the CDC, if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

RESPONSIBILITY

Human Resource Services is responsible for (1) collaborating with Executive Council, managers and/or supervisors, when appropriate; (2) collaborating with DHEC, the Department of Administration's Division of State Human Resources (DSHR), and the sixteen colleges when practical and appropriate; (3) coordinating with Finance to disinfect the impacted work and common spaces; (4) contact tracing and notifying "close contacts" (if applicable); (5) establishing anticipated return to work dates; and (6) performing any other related actions each unique situation may dictate.

REFERENCE

SC Department of Health and Environmental Control *"Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Scenarios In Business"*, Revised August 11, 2021

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *"When You've Been Fully Vaccinated"*; Updated August 19, 2021.