

COVID-19: Supervisor's Guide to Reporting Employee Illness, Infection and Testing and Employee Privacy



Department of Human Resources

June 3, 2020

This document outlines some common questions and answers regarding:

- Supervisor responsibilities for reporting an employee's COVID-19-related illness, infection, or testing;
- maintaining employee privacy with respect to illness and health information;
- Supervisor response measures after an employee report of a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19.

More information on the University's response to COVID-19 can be found at www.uwindsor.ca/coronavirus If you have any further questions, please contact a member of the Health and Safety team by email at safety@uwindsor.ca

Employee Privacy

As with other employee illnesses and health information, reasonable measures must be taken to protect the identity of an employee with respect to COVID-19. No names or identifying details should be given when information is communicated to other individuals and/or departments. The University will take appropriate actions to mitigate any possible risks in the workplace.

If I suspect an employee may have COVID-19, what questions can I ask?

You may ask the following questions to protect the health and safety in the workplace, without violating your employee's right to privacy:

- Are you exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?
- Have you come into close personal contact with anyone who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms?
- Have you travelled outside of the country in the last 14 days or been in close contact with anyone who has travelled?
- If your employee answered yes to any of these questions, ask the employee to self-isolate for at least 14 days and, if symptoms develop, to contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 519-258-2146 ext. 1420.

Possible cases of COVID-19

One of my employees suspects they may have COVID-19 or was in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19. What do I do?

- Supervisors should advise employees who have been potentially exposed to the virus, or who are exhibiting flu-like symptoms such as fever, tiredness, coughing, or congestion, to:
 - Stay home and self-isolate for at least a 14-day period;
 - Contact their physician or local health authority for further direction;
 - Await a follow up call from the University of Windsor's Lead Physician on the pandemic planning committee; and
 - The employee will not be permitted to return to work until they are cleared by the applicable health authorities.
- Supervisor to report the employee's illness to Health and Safety (ext. 4547 or email: kiritsis@uwindsor.ca);
- Reasonable measures must be taken to protect the identity of the employee who may have been exposed;
- Supervisors will be contacted to provide information on the employee's work location and possible contacts for the 14-day period prior to reporting COVID-19 symptoms. Supervisors shall ensure all areas in the workplace that were potentially infected by a confirmed or probable case are secured until the area is properly cleaned and disinfected.

One of my employees is displaying symptoms of potential COVID-19 while at work. What do I do?

If an employee begins to display flu-like symptoms while at work, Supervisors should:

- Immediately separate the employee from others and safely isolate them outside if possible, in a separate area away from others. Ensure social distancing measures (2 m distance) are maintained during this process;
- Instruct the employee to avoid touching anything, take extra care to contain coughs and sneezes, and return home immediately to undergo a 14-day self isolation period;
- If available, provide the employee with a mask to prevent the potential spread of the virus through respiratory droplets;
- Have a plan in place for how the affected employee can be safely transferred home without using public transit, if possible;
- Advise the employee to self-isolate at home and call the Windsor-Essex County Health (519-258-2146 ext. 1420), Telehealth (1-866-797-0000), or their physician regarding next steps.;
- Report the employee's illness to Health and Safety (ext. 4547 or email: kiritsis@uwindsor.ca); and
- Ensure all areas in the workplace that were potentially infected by the employee are secured until the area is properly cleaned and disinfected.

Positive Case of COVID-19

What should I do if an employee reports a positive case of COVID-19?

- Supervisors should advise the employee:
 - To stay home and self-isolate for at least a 14-day period;
 - To follow the direction of their physician or local health authority;
 - They will receive a follow up call from the University of Windsor's Lead Physician on the pandemic planning committee; and
 - They will not be permitted to return to work until they are cleared by the applicable public health authorities.
- The Windsor Essex County Health Unit is notified of all cases of COVID-19 within their jurisdiction regardless of who issued or conducted the testing. The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit will lead any investigation into positive cases and related contact tracing. The University may be required to assist with this process.
- Supervisor to report the employee's illness to Health and Safety (ext. 4547 or email: kiritsis@uwindsor.ca);
- Reasonable measures must be taken to protect the identity of the employee who has contracted COVID-19.
- Supervisors will be contacted to provide information on the employee's work location and possible contacts for the 14-day period prior to reporting COVID-19 symptoms. Supervisors shall ensure all areas in the workplace that were potentially infected by a confirmed or probable case are secured until the area is properly cleaned and disinfected.

If it is reported or it is expected that an employee's COVID-19 infection occurred at the workplace or in the course of employment, an Accident/Incident Report must be completed by the Supervisor and employee as best possible. The Accident/Incident Report can be accessed at www.uwindsor.ca/safety/report-an-accident

Employee Concerns Regarding COVID-19

Can an employee refuse to work if they are afraid of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace?

When an employee has reason to believe there is a dangerous condition present in the workplace, or their duties present a danger to their health and safety, the employee may be able to refuse work or certain duties. Supervisors are to follow the University's Work Refusal process, which can be accessed at www.uwindsor.ca/safety/workrefusal

Supervisors have an obligation to investigate the employee's concerns, and to take all reasonable precautions for a worker's health and safety, without reprisal.

If an employee is experiencing stress and anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic, what can I do?

It is natural for individuals to experience different levels of anxiety and stress under these circumstances. Supervisors can refer employees to the services that are available for support:

- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) <https://www.workhealthlife.com/>
The University of Windsor provides employees with access to Morneau Shepell, an outside counselling service, to provide professional counselling and information services to staff and their eligible immediate family members.
- Coronavirus and UWindsor: Mental Health Wellbeing Portal online at:
<http://www.uwindsor.ca/coronavirus/377/wellbeing-portal>
- Community resources and a listing of local support services available at: <https://www.wechu.org/cv/mental-health>

Resources

Where can I find more information?

University of Windsor COVID-19 website www.uwindsor.ca/coronavirus

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit <https://www.wechu.org/>

Government of Canada Coronavirus information

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html

Ontario Ministry of Health Coronavirus information

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly.

These protocols will be updated on an as-required basis to reflect the latest adopted measures.

References and Sources Consulted:

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit <https://www.wechu.org/cv/workplaces>

Government of Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19/rights-responsibilities.html>

Ontario Ministry of Health <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

Mathews Dinsdale FAQ's: COVID-19 and the Workplace – Updated April 13/20 By Paul D. McLean

<https://mathewsdinsdale.com/covid-19-and-the-workplace-frequently-asked-questions/>