

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



Department of Human Resources

May 1, 2022

This document outlines some common questions and answers regarding:

- maintaining employee privacy with respect to illness and health information;
- Supervisor response measures after an employee report of a positive or presumed case of COVID-19; and
- frequently asked questions and additional resources.

More information on the University's response to COVID-19 can be found at www.uwindsor.ca/returntocampus
Supervisors can also 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.

Supervisors 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? When did your symptoms start?
- Have you come into close contact with anyone who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?
- Have you been tested or plan to be tested for COVID-19?
- Has your health care provider or the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit asked you to self-isolate or get tested?
- Have you travelled outside of the country in the last 14 days or been in close contact with anyone who has travelled?
- Confirmation of details regarding work days and locations, potential close contacts on campus, and procedures/protocols followed.

Supervisor Responsibilities – Employee Reports Relating to COVID-19

If a Supervisor receives information about an employee illness/absence due to their [self-assessment](#) for COVID-19, instruct the employee to stay home and email: covid19reporting@uwindsor.ca, which will provide the employee with instructions and information regarding return to campus.

Should the Supervisor receive information about an employee illness/absence due to a positive or presumed case of COVID-19, or due to close contact with a positive/presumed case of COVID-19, they should confirm the instructions provided to their employee as noted in the two reporting sections below:

1. Employee Report of a Positive or Presumed Case of COVID-19
2. Employee Report of Close Contact with a Positive or Presumed Case of COVID-19

Supervisors should refer employees to the document [COVID-19: Employee Guide to Reporting Illness, Infection and Testing and Employee Privacy](#), which contains information and instructions for employees to follow when reporting situations relating to COVID-19.

1. Supervisor Responsibilities – Employee Report of a Positive or Presumed Case of COVID-19

If an employee reports they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or has received a positive result for COVID-19 on a PCR or rapid antigen test, the Supervisor must advise the employee to:

- Stay home and self-isolate, do not come to campus;
- Report their illness by emailing the following address: covid19reporting@uwindsor.ca, which will provide the employee with instructions and information regarding return to campus;
- Contact their health care provider, Telehealth, or public health authority for additional health information; and
- Follow the directions regarding return to campus as outlined in the instruction email.

If an employee reports the onset of symptoms of COVID-19 while at work:

- 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) and masking 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 self isolation period;
- If the employee does not have their own transportation, or is unfit/unable to drive home safely, assist with arrangements for the employee to be safely transferred home without using public transit, if possible; and
- Follow the reporting procedure noted above.

Supervisors shall:

- Take reasonable measures to protect the identity of the employee who is self-isolating;
- Consult with Health and Safety, to address any questions or concerns; and
- Provide additional information as requested by Health and Safety.

Note: 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

2. Supervisor Responsibilities – Employee Report of Close Contact with a Positive or Presumed Case of COVID-19

If an employee reports someone living in the same household has tested positive for COVID-19, or has symptoms of COVID-19, Supervisors should advise the employee to:

- Stay home and self-isolate, do not come to campus;
- Report their **close contact** by emailing the following address: covid19reporting@uwindsor.ca, which will provide the employee with instructions and information regarding return to campus;

Close contact means:

- *being less than two metres apart for at least a cumulative duration of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period, within the 48-hour period before symptoms began, or, if no symptoms, the date of the positive test; or,*
- *living in the same home.*

** This definition does not apply to those who wear prescribed Personal Protective Equipment.*

- Follow the directions regarding return to campus as outlined in the instruction email.

Supervisors shall:

- Take reasonable measures to protect the identity of the employee who is self-isolating;
- Consult with Health and Safety, to address any questions or concerns; and
- Provide additional information as requested by Health and Safety.

Employee Concerns Regarding COVID-19: FAQs

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 Life Works, 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](#)
- [Mental Health and Well-Being Supports and Resources](#)
- Community resources and a listing of local support services available at: <https://www.wechu.org/cv/mental-health>

Additional Resources

University of Windsor [Return to Campus website](#)

[Windsor-Essex County Health Unit](#)

[Government of Canada Coronavirus information](#)

[Ontario Ministry of Health Coronavirus information](#)

[Public Services Health and Safety Association](#)

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 – By Paul D. McLean

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