

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



Department of Human Resources

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This document outlines some common questions and answers regarding:

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

Employee Report - Symptoms of COVID-19

If an employee reports they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the Supervisor should advise the employee to:

- Stay home and self-isolate, do not come to campus;
- Contact their health care provider, Telehealth, or public health authority for further direction;
- Await a follow up call from the University of Windsor Health and Safety office;
- Forward their record of work days/locations and possible close contacts for the 14-day period prior to reporting COVID-19 symptoms; and
- Not return to work until they are cleared by the applicable health authorities and the Health and Safety office.

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) 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 available, provide the employee with a mask to prevent the potential spread of the virus through respiratory droplets;
- 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
- Advise the employee to self-isolate at home and contact their health care provider, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (519-258-2146 ext. 1420), or Telehealth (1-866-797-0000), regarding next steps, and await a call from Health and Safety.

After receiving the employee report of illness, the Supervisor must:

- Promptly report the employee's illness to the Health and Safety office at: safety@uwindsor.ca including information on the employee's work days/locations and possible close contacts for the 14-day period to reporting COVID-19 symptoms;
- Take reasonable measures to protect the identity of the employee who is self-isolating;
- Consult with Health and Safety, to review/determine if additional measures are required (e.g. securing work area, closures, additional cleaning and disinfection, etc.);
- Provide additional information as requested by Health and Safety.

Employee Report – Positive Case of COVID-19, Potential Exposure, or Denied (Red) Screening Badge

If an employee reports a positive case of COVID-19, a potential exposure, or forwards their denied (red) screening badge, Supervisors should advise the employee to:

- Stay home and self-isolate, do not come to campus;
- Await a follow-up call from the University's Health and Safety office;
- Forward their work days/locations and possible close contacts for the 14-day period prior to the report;
- Contact their health care provider, WECHU, or Telehealth for further direction, if needed; and
- Not return to work until they are cleared by the applicable health authorities and the Health and Safety office.

After receiving the employee's report, the Supervisor must:

- Promptly advise the Health and Safety office of the employee's report/denied badge at: safety@uwindsor.ca, including information on the employee's work days/locations and possible close contacts for the 14-day period prior;
- Take reasonable measures to protect the identity of the employee;
- Report the employee's work locations to Health and Safety, to review/determine if additional measures are required (e.g. securing work area, closures, additional cleaning and disinfection, etc.);
- Provide additional information as requested by Health and Safety.

Please 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

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 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>

Additional Resources

University of Windsor Return to Campus website www.uwindsor.ca/returntocampus

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>

Public Services Health and Safety Association <https://www.pshsa.ca/covid-19>

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/>