

# HOW TO SCREEN AND TEST EMPLOYEES TO CREATE A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

When criteria have been met, the state of Utah wants businesses to safely reopen without becoming locations where COVID-19 spreads. Employees who are physically returning to workplaces may face increased exposure to the virus, especially if their job duties require a high degree of physical interaction with the public or other employees. It is important to make these individuals feel confident they are working in an environment that is not jeopardizing their health. Although no amount of testing today, viral or antibody, will guarantee the ongoing safety of all employees and customers, screening and testing employees can help increase workplace safety and employee confidence.

## What general guidelines should my business follow to reopen as safely as possible?

- Follow the Utah Leads Together 2.0 [Phased Guidelines](#).
- Maintain social distancing practices as much as possible. If possible, design workspaces to enable employees to maintain a 6-foot distance and not face one another.
- Employees should be encouraged to wear face coverings when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Increase hygiene/disinfection practices. Businesses should make a list of high-touch surfaces and disinfect them with EPA-approved disinfectant, industrial cleaner, diluted bleach, or alcohol solutions.
- Promote etiquette for coughing, sneezing, and handwashing. Employees should avoid touching their face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth. Place posters that encourage hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Designate an employee as the business's COVID-19 Lead and require that lead to become familiar with screening, testing, and quarantine guidelines.

## When should employees be screened for COVID-19 symptoms?

- Screen all employees at the start of their shift to determine their temperature and inquire if they have symptoms that day. Employers can use several methods to screen employees:

- The [Healthy Together App](#) and [TestUtah](#)
- Thermometer
  - The CDC and state/local health authorities have acknowledged community spread of COVID-19 and issued attendant precautions. Because of this, employers may measure employees' body temperature. However, employers should be aware that some people with COVID-19 do not have a fever, so it is a best practice to screen for other symptoms in addition to a fever.
  - The temperature reading should be kept confidential and the person administering the temperature check should be trained on the procedure.
  - Ensure that there is social distancing maintained when employees are standing in line to have their temperatures measured at the beginning of a shift.

## What are COVID-19 symptoms?

Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or above, cough, trouble/shortness of breath, sore throat, sudden change in taste or smell, muscle aches and pains.

## Should I keep an employee screening/symptom checking log?

The ADA requires that if a symptom log is kept, the employer must maintain the confidentiality of this information. Additionally, all medical information about a particular employee must be stored separately from the employee's personnel file, thus limiting access to this confidential information.

## What should I do if an employee has one or more symptoms?

- The employee should not be allowed to enter the workplace.
- The employer should have the employee identify close contacts at work (currently defined as within a 6-foot distance for 10 minutes or more), provide the employee with a list of nearby testing sites, and recommend the employee immediately leave to be tested for COVID-19. The COVID-19 Lead should alert

close contacts of the symptomatic employee while maintaining confidentiality. Those who have been in close contact with a positive case are recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days, closely monitor for symptoms, and should get tested if symptoms appear. A best practice is to pay employees for their time spent getting tested for COVID-19.

## Where can I find testing sites for my employee?

Testing sites can be found on the [Healthy Together app](#), [testutah.com](#), or <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/utah-covid-19-testing-locations/>.

## How much will testing cost?

Under the Families [First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#), testing is free for everyone regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. Co-pays or in-network requirements are waived for those being tested.

## What should my business do post-test?

- Businesses should encourage symptomatic employees to stay home and self-quarantine until employees receive their test results, which typically take around 48-72 hours.
- Even if the employee tests negative, the employee should not be allowed to re-enter the workplace until symptoms have ceased.

## What if an employee tests positive?

- Public health staff will call the employee to conduct contact tracing and provide the employee with self-quarantine information.
- The employer should offer paid leave pursuant to the FFCRA and consider providing supportive benefits and wrap around services such as non-punitive sick leave policies that allow employees to feel safe reporting symptoms to management. Such policies protect the workplace by facilitating employees remaining away from work when they test positive, or are required to follow isolation/quarantine recommendations.

## What if I need help notifying employees about a possible exposure?

The Utah Department of Health's Worksite Team contacts businesses where a positive employee has been identified and can assist with notifying employees about possible exposure and conducting contact tracing. They can be reached at [covid-19work@utah.gov](mailto:covid-19work@utah.gov).

## What if I want employees who do not have COVID-19 symptoms to be tested?

In order to increase employee confidence, employers may elect to test asymptomatic employees. The ADA requires that any mandatory medical test of employees be job-related and consistent with business necessity. Because COVID-19 poses a direct threat to the health of others, it is within the rights of an employer to administer COVID-19 testing to employees to determine if they have the virus.

## How can my business utilize IgG antibody testing prior to reopening a workplace?

- An antibody test is different from a confirmatory PCR test. An antibody blood test may show if someone has ever been infected with COVID-19, whereas a PCR test is used to diagnose whether an individual is currently sick with COVID-19 or not. A PCR test is done with a nasopharyngeal (nasal) swab; antibody tests require a blood draw or finger prick.
- Antibody tests are best used to screen individuals to determine whether they had previously been infected with the virus. If an antibody test returns a positive result, a PCR test is still needed to confirm the individual is not presently infected.
- Antibody tests should not be used as the only way to diagnose someone as being currently sick with COVID-19. Because of this, employees who test positive for the antibody should also get tested for COVID-19 to ensure they are not currently infected.
- If an employee's antibody test is positive and the virus test is negative, the employee may have some level of immunity to COVID-19 and should be allowed back to the workplace. Not enough is known about the virus in the long term to be certain of immunity, so businesses should continue to follow best practices and the guidelines for maintaining social distancing practices as much as possible.
- Any employee showing symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of their antibody status, should be sent home and tested for the virus. They should remain isolated until symptoms resolve.