



AAA Memo: HCM 20-12

Date: August 17, 2020

Agency directors,

Thank you for all of the work you have done this year in response to the current pandemic and the need to move the state's workforce to remote status. Many of you have begun to reintegrate your workforce into your physical offices and others are considering how to do so effectively.

If you wish to bring some of your workforce back into your building while following the [CDC Social Distancing guidance](#), the [EPA Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) and the [OURS plan](#), please do so. At the same time, if you are delivering quality service to your constituents remotely and managing your employees effectively, please continue to use teleworking as a management tool.

As workers return to the office, there will undoubtedly be situations in which someone tests positive for COVID-19 or has a high-risk exposure. What follows are the recommended steps for reintegrating those employees into your offices.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19

Those with [mild to moderate illness](#) who are not severely immunocompromised may return to work when:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved, as reported by the employee **AND**
- The employee wears a mask when returning to work at least until all symptoms have resolved.

Those with [severe to critical illness](#) and those who are severely immunocompromised may return to work when:

- At least 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved, as reported by the employee **AND**
- The employee wears a mask when returning to work at least until all symptoms have resolved.

Those who are not severely immunocompromised and who were asymptomatic throughout their COVID-19 infection may return to work when at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test.

If an employee participates in a high-risk activity or has a high-risk exposure

- High-Risk Gathering with No Known Transmission: Employee should isolate away from work for seven days after gathering, self-monitor for symptoms, and contact appropriate agency leadership if symptoms occur; then test for possible infection or shedding using a PCR test.
- Gathering/Event with Known Transmission: Employee should isolate away from work for 14 days after gathering, self-monitor for symptoms, and contact appropriate agency leadership if symptoms occur; then test for possible infection or shedding using a PCR test.
- High-Risk Domestic and International Travel: Employee should isolate away from work for 14 days upon return to Oklahoma, self-monitor for symptoms, and contact appropriate agency leadership if symptoms occur; then test for possible infection or shedding using PCR test. All domestic and international cruises require a 14-day quarantine.
- COVID-19 Exposure in a Community/Workplace: Employee should isolate away from work for 14 days after exposure, self-monitor for symptoms, and contact appropriate agency leadership if symptoms occur; then test for possible shedding or infection using PCR test.
- High-Risk Household COVID-19 Exposure: Employee should isolate away from work for 14 days after the infected person has a negative PCR test. Self-monitor for symptoms and contact the appropriate agency leadership if symptoms occur; then test for possible clearance using PCR test.
- NOTE: If the individual elects to remain away from the household during the ongoing exposure, the individual may be eligible for a reduced isolation period of 14 days after separation from the infected individual.

PCR tests are preferred over all other options. Negative rapid antigen tests and negative rapid non-amplifying molecular tests are not accepted for clearance.

In addition, [mask usage](#) is strongly encouraged when workers cannot socially distance as it is an effective method of preventing the spread of infection when we talk, cough, sneeze and breathe. Use of masks during meetings, while moving throughout your facilities, and when social distancing is not an option is highly encouraged. I would like to ask each of you, as agency leaders, to model this behavior for your staff and to help reduce the stigma of wearing masks in these situations. Especially when our agency employees are dealing directly with the public, they should wear masks to protect the health of our constituents.

There are a number of other variables to consider as your teams begin to work in close quarters again. Previously, I communicated a list of considerations while planning to return to work for your employees. Those points are included at the end of this email for those of you who would like to look them over again.

I understand your considerations will vary based on the services you provide and the constituents you serve but I hope you find this guidance helpful. My No. 1 ask for each of you is that you identify a means to serve your constituents well, especially in challenging times.

Thank you for your continued work and consistent adherence to standards of excellence in an unpredictable year. We have come a long way since March, and that is because of the work you and your employees are putting in. Please feel free to reach out with questions as you move forward.

John Budd

Below is a list of considerations for those agencies planning to reopen their physical workspace. These were shared in the AAA memo on April 29 but are included here for your convenience.

Facility considerations

- Establish social distancing expectations, which may include acting as follows:
 - Maintain a distance of six feet from others at all times.
 - Limit break rooms to single occupancy.
 - Close common areas where personnel are likely to congregate and interact, or enforce strict social distancing protocols.
 - Use meeting rooms as a last resort.
 - Maintain six feet of distance between individuals in conference rooms.
 - Use videoconferencing as an alternative.
 - Limit elevators to single occupancy when possible.
 - Use stairs as the primary method of travel between floors. Where possible, designate one stairwell for traveling up and another for traveling down.
 - Limit or eliminate in-person meetings and group activities/lunches.
 - Increase space between desks and workstations or install barriers between desks.
 - Consider assigning alternating schedules for staff to use large open cubicle areas to allow for additional space between workers.
 - Adjust points of entry to buildings.
 - Control lanes can be created using barriers for office buildings with large single points of entry.
 - Increase frequency and thoroughness of building cleanings, such as:
 - Make disinfectant wipes available in common spaces such as break rooms, conference rooms, outside elevators, stairwells and lobbies.
 - Thoroughly clean office spaces once per day including disinfecting surfaces, chairs, keyboards and light switches.
 - Cleaning restrooms twice daily.
 - Disinfect door handles, switches, buttons and other high-touch surfaces on a regular schedule throughout the day.
 - Establish procedures for ensuring mail and packages are cleaned or quarantined prior to handling and distribution.
 - Establish guidelines for customers and visitors to the building, which may include:
 - Limit the number of customers or visitors allowed in the building at one time.
 - Interface with customers using phone, web conference or other contactless methods.
 - Install plexiglass barriers at customer interface portals to protect against airborne pathogens.

General safety considerations

- Monitor and follow guidance from sources such as Centers for Disease Control Prevention, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Oklahoma State Department of Health and other federal, state and local entities.
 - Consider the employer obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
- Consider providing personal protective equipment, such as masks, gloves, face shields and hand sanitizer, especially for employees whose job duties put them in proximity to other individuals.
 - Evaluate each employee's risk of exposure to COVID-19 as a result of job duties when determining precautions to implement and type of PPE to supply.
- Encourage hand-washing and post signage at hand-washing stations.
 - Set up hand sanitizer stations.
- Implement employee health screening measures. Measures may include:
 - Employee temperature screenings prior to entering the building.
 - Employee questionnaires prior to returning to work regarding potential exposure, symptoms and travel in preceding two weeks.
- Set expectations for how positive COVID-19 tests will be handled if an employee who has returned to the building tests positive.
 - Require employees to notify the agency immediately if exposed or sick.

- Ensure employees are aware the agency is required to notify close proximity co-workers or customers who may have been exposed so they can take precautions or get tested.

Staffing considerations

- Implement a phased approach to return to work based on your agency needs, work functions performed, mission-critical status and other objective criteria.
- In order to reduce the number of employees in office buildings, consider utilizing measures such as:
 - Telework.
 - Reduced schedules.
 - Staggered schedules or designated shifts.
- Engage in individual discussions with employees at high risk for infection who may require accommodations. Potential accommodations include, but are not limited to:
 - Telework.
 - Use of accrued leave or leave without pay.
 - Adjusted work hours to avoid or reduce contact with others.
 - Isolated workstations.
 - Additional PPE.
- Offer leave to eligible employees under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in accordance with the law.

Technology considerations

- Equipment:
 - Before staff bring equipment back into the office, agencies should review the asset inventory for each staff member to determine what equipment went home and what should be returned.
 - Agencies should identify a location for physically cleaning equipment. Agency heads will identify the appropriate personnel to handle the cleaning stations.
 - Agencies should establish a schedule for staff to bring equipment in for cleaning prior to returning the equipment to their workspace.
 - Equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the [OMES COVID electronics cleaning guidance](#), as well as [CDC guidelines](#). Adherence to these policies will prevent unintended voidance of machine warranties. Cleaners should be purchased through your agency's normal procurement channels.
 - Once equipment has been physically cleaned, it can be safely returned to the employee's workspace.
- Security:
 - Agencies should review the [Personal Device Standard](#) for guidance on employees who used their personal device(s) for state business. If there were deviations from this standard, please contact cybercommand@omes.ok.gov.
 - Unified agencies can connect workstations to the network once physically cleaned. Any security issues will be identified through OMES security tools.
 - Non-unified agencies should consult with their agency IT group to determine if additional actions are required prior to connecting workstations.
 - For specific technology questions, please reach out to your OMES IT strategist.
 - For cybersecurity concerns, please visit the [Oklahoma Cyber Command website](#) or email cybercommand@omes.ok.gov.

Communications considerations

- Establish a communications strategy for employees and customers regarding your agency plans to reopen office buildings.

- Clearly communicate actions taken to ensure the health and safety of employees and customers.
- Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick.
- Communicate with vendors that supply contract workers to ensure they are requiring contractors to stay home if sick.
- Notify employees of any new agency policies or modifications to existing policies.

Policy considerations

- Implement new or revise existing agency telework or flexible schedule policies, if needed.
- Clarify leave request procedures or policies such that employees are expected to notify the agency if they are sick. Ensure employees are made aware of this change.
- Relax attendance policies as needed to encourage employees to stay home if they are sick or to care for a family member who is sick.
 - Relax requirements regarding the need for medical documentation if an employee is sick.
- Implement or update business continuity plans to include infection disease response.
- Set expectations with employees that all return-to-work requirements and policies are to be followed and provide clear consequences for employees who fail to follow them.

Minimize all nonessential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel.