HUMAN RESOURCES

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To: Ceres Employees

From: Aaron Slater
Director of Human Resources

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Subject: <u>**Exposure Protocol and Protecting City Employees**</u>

Protecting Employees from Potential Exposure to COVID-19

COVID-19 is believed to spread through respiratory droplets among close contacts. A potential exposure means having close contact with (being within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more), *or* having direct contact with bodily fluids (phlegm, blood or respiratory droplets) of, an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having close contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (100 degrees or higher), cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.

1. Protocol to Protect Employees from Workplace Exposure

Employees must follow the safety protocol already in place while at City worksites, including:

- Social distancing,
- Covering coughs and sneezes,
- Maintaining hand hygiene,

- Wearing face coverings when and where required,
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and/or shared equipment/workspaces, and
- Staying home when sick/monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms.

Employees whose duties require them to work in the field should use caution in interacting with members of the public:

- If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from members of the public.
- Avoid touching surfaces often touched by the public.
- If your duties require you to touch surfaces/equipment accessible to the public, practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces following the directions on the cleaning product's label.
- Proper hand hygiene is an important infection control measure. Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Key times to clean hands include:
  - Before, during, and after preparing food
  - Before eating food
  - After using the toilet
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Additional workplace-specific times to clean hands include:
  - Before and after work shifts
  - Before and after work breaks
  - After touching frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and handrails
- Avoid contact with body fluids.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Use gloves, masks, and other PPE as appropriate and per City safety procedures.

2. Return to Work Protocol for Post-Exposure, Asymptomatic Employees

Employees who believe they have or may have been exposed to COVID-19 through close contact with a symptomatic individual or someone who has tested positive for the virus, whether at work or home, must inform the supervisor, Director of Human Resources and/or the City Manager as soon as

possible. If a known exposure or potential exposure occurred away from the City worksite, the employee must inform the supervisor Human Resources Director and/or the City Manager prior to reporting or returning to work at a City worksite.

Current CDC guidance advises that to ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, critical infrastructure workers are permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, *provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are employed.* Accordingly, employees in this situation generally may remain at work and must adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

- **Pre-Screen:** The City will measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to the employee entering the facility and/or starting work.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they must self-monitor (as described below) under the supervision of the City's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. The City will supply facemasks, if available. Employee-supplied cloth face coverings or masks may be used in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social/physical distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean Work Spaces:** Areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment must be cleaned and disinfected routinely.

Self-monitoring means that these employees should monitor themselves for fever by taking their temperature twice a day and remain alert for respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat). All employees who are self-monitoring must contact the supervisor, the Human Resource Director and/or City Manager if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms during the self-monitoring period to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

3. **Return to Work Protocol for Symptomatic or Confirmed COVID-19 Employees**

If an employee becomes sick during their shift, he or she will be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected.

If the employee tests positive for the virus, information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others who have had close contact with the employee during this time would be considered potentially exposed. These additional employees will be informed of the possibility of exposure, but confidentiality of the medical information of the ill employee will be maintained. Those other potentially exposed employees should follow the advice at the beginning of this sub-section.

The CDC set forth two criteria for return to work if an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of the virus.

1. *Test-based strategy.* Employees will be excluded from work until:
    - Fever is resolved (below 99.9 degrees) without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
    - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) has occurred, **and**
    - Receipt of negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected more than 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

2. *Non-test-based strategy*. Employees will be excluded from work until:
    - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as resolution of fever (below 99.9 degrees) without the use of fever-reducing medications *and* improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
    - At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

If the employee was never tested for COVID-19 but has an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.

Upon returning to work after a positive test result, employees must:

- **Wear a face mask** at all times while at work until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- **Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.**
- **Self-monitor** for symptoms and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or been advised by a physician that you likely have the virus, being at the workplace may create a direct threat to your coworkers. Thus, it is imperative that employees follow this protocol prior to returning to work.

In addition, the City may request a return-to-work certification from your treating physician in order to protect your coworkers and the public from exposure. Returning to the workplace when know you are sick with the virus and exposing others to the virus could be grounds for disciplinary action.

COMMON QUESTIONS:
We had a potential exposure at my workplace. Should everyone I came into contact with since the exposure self-isolate or quarantine?
Public health experts agree that a person <u>can</u> transmit the virus to others before he or she has symptoms, but in the minutes and hours after the initial exposure, it is not possible for a carrier to transmit the virus to others. A virus is different than a bacteria, which can be transmitted more readily after exposure. Viruses require time to get into the carrier's system and replicate to a sufficient degree before the person becomes infectious or has symptoms.
For someone to become infected, the following must occur:
1. The carrier (person you are exposed to) must be COVID-19 positive and be contagious; and
2. That person must shed the virus (meaning cough, sneeze, or spit); and
3. That infectious material must get inside the other person via respiratory or mucus membrane (eye, nose, mouth); and
4. The newly exposed person's body has to accept and replicate the virus; and
5. Then it takes time – current consensus in the medical community is generally around three days – to incubate inside the newly exposed person's body to become contagious. The incubation period could vary

in the general population, however, to as little as two days and as much as fourteen days. It is unclear at this point, but time frames may be shorter when individuals with underlying health issues are involved.

So, even if you got coughed on by someone who is actually positive, and that person shed the virus in your presence, the virus got into your body, and you eventually come down with the virus, it is highly unlikely that you could infect someone else right away. In those first hours and days, the vast majority of the general population would not have enough of the virus in their system to be contagious to others, as it will not have had time to replicate.

If you were exposed, those with whom you had incidental contact should not be concerned. Those who live with you should engage in self-monitoring until it is known if you are, in fact, infected with the virus.

What if I was exposed to someone who is currently symptomatic but is waiting for a COVID-19 test to confirm whether he or she is infected?
Employees should treat this circumstance as if the person were positive for the virus until it is confirmed that he or she is negative. Go through all of the steps outlined above – Pre-Screen, Regular Monitoring, Wear a Mask, Social Distance, Disinfect and Clean work spaces.

How can employees work safely in proximity to one another during the pandemic?
The CDC has issued additional guidelines for employees to follow to ensure they remain illness-free. These include:

- Do not share headsets or other objects that are near the mouth or nose.
- Employers should increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces. Employees may want to develop their own cleaning regimen for their individual work areas for additional peace of mind.
- Use face coverings.
- Physically distance from coworkers when taking breaks together. Stagger breaks, don't congregate in the break room, and don't share food or utensils.