

# COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Training Environments

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Developed in Partnership by Caruth Police Institute at University of North Texas at Dallas and Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University

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## **Background and Purpose**

As the world and our law enforcement community are facing an unknown timeline in the battle against COVID-19, a partnership between the Caruth Police Institute at the University of Texas at Dallas and the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University (CPI/LEMIT) prepares to offer executive law enforcement development in an unprecedented manner. With information, policies, and guidance rapidly changing, CPI/LEMIT has prepared this safety plan to resume training opportunities so that we may meet operational and mandated requirements for Texas law enforcement agencies with an appropriate balance of mitigating risks to those involved in training.

The COVID-19 situation continues to rapidly evolve. While CPI/LEMIT makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of information, the content of these action plans may not reflect the most current governmental executive orders and/or CDC policy developments. Due to this fluidity training agencies are highly encouraged to seek appropriate advice and guidance as to particular facts and circumstances at any given time based on information contained herein.

The following guidelines are provided as a model so that each training institution or agency, small or large, can adopt safety standards. You may modify these guidelines based on existing campus, training facility, training environment, and local resources. In doing so, each institution should seek guidance and coordination from their local and state public health agencies. Additional information about COVID-19 is available and consistently updated from the following source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

***We would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Alexander Eastman, MD, MPH, FACS, FAEMS; Senior Medical Officer–Operations at the United States Department of Homeland Security, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, for providing expert guidance and consult for the development of these guidelines.***

***Dr. Eastman is a member of the Caruth Police Institute Executive Advisory Board.***

## **Introduction**

Intelligence indicators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other authorities have indicated that the COVID-19 will remain active for approximately the next 12-18 months<sup>1</sup>. However, changing external factors such as testing capabilities, the availability of therapeutics, and a vaccine will enable the community to participate in a renewed environment of continuing education. At such time educational operations resume, a training agency will likely experience a positive COVID-19 case. It is critical for all agencies and their partners to stay informed and responsive to the matter so that appropriate and adequate resources and protocols will be available for immediate and effective intervention.

We acknowledge that these COVID-19 policies are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. No single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and COVID-19 infection, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk. Six interrelated functions covering training operations are critical to guide planning efforts:

- Staffing
- Communications
- Screening and Security
- Facilities and Services
- Training Operations
- Training Management

## **COVID-19 Administrative Training Functions**

### **Staffing**

#### **On-Site Work Requirements**

- CPI/LEMIT staff required for on-site execution and coordination of programs will return to on-site work for resumption of duties in a COVID-19 environment that has employed mitigation strategies and procedures to minimize risk for staff, instructors, and participants.
- To minimize as many transmission paths as possible, any function that can continue to be conducted from a remote posture will continue to be delivered in this manner.
- CPI/LEMIT staff, when applicable, shall advise their supervisor of any proposed change to working conditions, (e.g., any new training protocols, any new training certification requirements, and/or any changes to position descriptions).
- CPI/LEMIT leadership, Directors, managers, and supervisors will communicate with staff any change in protocols or responsiveness of operational matters. It is important to stay informed in order to sustain execution of duties.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>

## Communications

- CPI/LEMIT will execute an internal and external messaging campaign to key stakeholders.
- CPI/LEMIT will provide strategic information via multi-media (i.e., video, written messages, signage, streaming) that details relevant and up-to-date information from the CDC and details regarding proactive risk mitigation measures.
- CPI/LEMIT's intent is for internal and external audiences to recognize CPI/LEMIT's comprehensive efforts to reconstitute its mission while reducing risk to participants, staff, instructors, and all others who engage in CPI/LEMIT's professional development.
- CPI/LEMIT communications increase awareness of the contemporary and dynamic issues CPI/LEMIT is proactively addressing during the re-formation of education.
- CPI/LEMIT communications ensure stakeholders from multiple disciplines such as policing, mental health, public health, education, law, and academia are aware of the process and work done during this time.
- CPI/LEMIT communications confirm the efforts and strategies employed, ensuring stakeholders regarding CPI/LEMIT's capabilities and its plan to reconstitute training.

## Screening and Security

### Enhanced Participant Screening

Virologic testing is an important part of the overall public health strategy to limit the spread of COVID-19, however testing all participants for acute COVID-19 infection prior to the start of a course or training module is not feasible. Additionally, it is not clear that such testing would reduce the likelihood of spread within training environments as virologic testing only shows whether a person is infected at that specific moment in time<sup>2</sup>. So, although a negative virologic test result is reassuring, it does not mean that the participant or staff member is not going to subsequently develop COVID-19. Therefore, enhanced pre-arrival, day of arrival, and ongoing screening for symptoms and staff precautions will be implemented as follows:

#### Approximately 30 days prior to the start of training:

- Participants will receive COVID-19 screening questions recommended by the CDC and consistent with Department-level guidance.
- CPI/LEMIT will ask participants, for cautionary measures, to limit personal travel 14-days prior to traveling to a CPI/LEMIT Training Delivery Site (TDS).

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<sup>2</sup> For more see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

- CPI/LEMIT will require participants to acknowledge their understanding and receipt of this information.

Upon arrival and throughout time at training:

- Participants will again answer the COVID-19 screening questions, and CPI/LEMIT will provide a link to the current CDC prevention and protection guidelines<sup>3</sup>.
- CPI/LEMIT staff will conduct a participant temperature check with a touchless thermometer upon arrival to training facility.
- CPI/LEMIT will require participants to acknowledge their understanding and receipt of this information through signing a Release of Liability, Indemnification, and Assumption of the Risk Agreement and/or other institutional release of liability form (i.e., Texas A&M University, Texas Woman's University).
- Prior to the start of each training session, staff will screen students utilizing only the screening questions.
- Staff/instructors will direct students to perform self-checks throughout the day.
- Participants may undergo random body temperature screening performed by staff utilizing a touchless thermometer purchased by CPI/LEMIT.

**Staff/Instructor/Participant Interaction**

- Prior to pausing training operations, CPI/LEMIT enacted numerous controls to limit staff/instructor/participant interaction. These precautions include suspending staff's usage of indoor fitness facilities and University dining rooms and maximizing telework options.
- Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance of each building and CPI/LEMIT strongly encourages each individual to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer upon entering any building.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet is strongly encouraged whenever possible.
- Visitors will continue to be restricted, including graduation guests.
- CPI/LEMIT will continue to work with participants on delivering video of graduations or live streaming where possible.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A

## Response Actions for Positive or Suspected COVID-19 Cases

According to the CDC, as the list of symptoms of COVID-19 infection has grown since the start of the pandemic it is imperative to not rely on symptomology alone<sup>4</sup>. Temperature checks and symptom screening must be a frequent part of advanced screening processes to identify people who are symptomatic prior to entering buildings, dining halls, and training rooms. Beginning with the detection of elevated body temperature prior to entry to a training room or populated building, training centers and agencies must develop plans for a rapid response to a participant or staff member with fever who is on location.

To identify participants or staff members with a likely COVID-19 infection and reduce risk of transmission, CPI/LEMIT will conduct the following response actions:

- Individuals experiencing symptoms of possible COVID-19, to include:
  - cough,
  - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
  - chills and/or shaking with chills,
  - muscle pain,
  - headache,
  - sore throat,
  - new loss of taste or smell,
  - diarrhea, and/or
  - feeling feverish or a measured temperature of greater than or equal to 100.0

must immediately remove themselves from other participants, staff, and instructors. They must isolate and not return to campus until they have not had fever without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 72 hours, have had improvement in respiratory symptoms, and have been cleared by a personal physician. A release to return to training from the staff/participant's personal physician must be provided prior to return.

- All participants and staff will be removed from the training environment and all classroom and supporting facilities (i.e., restrooms, dining hall) surfaces will be immediately sanitized.
- If hospitalization is necessary, the point of contact from participant's emergency notification form will be made available.
- Individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19 must isolate at the hotel until the individual has been symptom-free for at least 72 hours.
- Staff shall coordinate any notice to staff/students/instructors of potential COVID-19 exposure.

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<sup>4</sup> For more see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

- Staff/Participants who have been in direct physical contact with a person infected with COVID-19 will be excused from training for a 14-day isolation period.
- Staff/Participants who have not been in close contact (i.e., one who did not have direct interaction with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is symptomatic) may continue to work and attend without need for isolation or medical advice so long as the person remains asymptomatic.
- All participant/staff/instructors should seek the advice of a medical professional and testing as advised.
- Procedures in place prior to CPI/LEMIT's pause in training operations will continue. Additionally, CPI/LEMIT may implement other changes to further limit staff/instructor/participant interaction.

## Facilities, Transportation, and Services

Physical distancing is simply the act of keeping people separated with the goal of limiting spread of contagion of COVID-19 between individuals<sup>5</sup>. It is fundamental to lowering the risk of spread of the virus, as the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread when someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes and respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although according to the CDC the virus cannot enter the body through the skin<sup>6</sup>, the virus can be spread by touching a surface contaminated with virus and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. While this is not the primary way the virus spreads, it remains imperative to ensure support services reflect these principles and surfaces are consistently disinfected and sanitized.

CPI/LEMIT has identified required actions to adopt and implement both appropriate physical distancing and cleaning and disinfecting solutions to ensure preparation for training resumption. CPI/LEMIT has categorized these actions across key areas participants are likely to share:

- Daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols are enhanced, and the University will deep clean/sanitize areas where an individual with a confirmed positive test result worked, studied, or housed.
- Areas identified as contaminated by a diagnosed person should be closed until deep cleaning is completed. When feasible, cleaning and disinfecting will occur after the area has been closed for 24 hours in line with CDC recommendations.
- Workspaces are continually assessed and, as necessary, modified to ensure social distancing.
- Size of classroom, dining, and recreational/wellness venues will follow CDC guidelines (six feet apart) to mitigate the virus.

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<sup>5</sup> For more see: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20200424.213070/full/>

<sup>6</sup> For more see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Spread>

## Facilities and Training Operations

- CPI/LEMIT will notify university custodial services of a scheduled session, and advise them of the number of attendees and whether lunch/dinner service is provided.
- CPI/LEMIT will continue enhanced and frequent cleaning and disinfecting of facilities, including training venues and training equipment.
- CPI/LEMIT will establish requirements for cleaning supplies at each training venue to ensure participants have the ability to conduct “self-help” in terms of cleaning and disinfecting their workspaces (e.g., computer keyboards).
- CPI/LEMIT will utilize exposure-reduction controls, administrative controls, and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) to remove, minimize exposure, and/or protect any persons from hazards identified to be relevant to COVID-19 exposure.

## Dining Operations

- CPI/LEMIT will inquire if food service contractors have implemented their emergency operations plans. Only food service vendors taking steps to prepare for operations in the COVID environment will be utilized.
- The food service vendors will implement administrative and engineering controls to provide safe dining services for participants, including:
  - Prioritizing boxed meals over food lines.
  - When boxed meals are not possible, food service providers will maintain all hot food and grill lines, while eliminating self-service, including dispensing beverages.
  - Temporarily closing salad lines, with packaged salads provided that include all condiments.
  - Reworking entrance and exit routes to include only one way in and one way out to enable social distancing.
  - Building and deploying exposure-reduction barriers.
  - Ensure social distancing guidelines are provided.
  - Deploying appropriate PPE to appropriate staff, in accordance with their emergency plans.
- CPI/LEMIT will implement physical distancing measures throughout the dining facilities during mealtimes.
- CPI/LEMIT can implement staggered meals times, thereby allowing for a reduction in occupancy during the hours of operation and allow for appropriate social distancing within the dining facilities.
- CPI/LEMIT may make seating assignments to permit social distancing among the participants.
- CPI/LEMIT will implement enhanced cleaning throughout the designated mealtime.
- CPI/LEMIT will limit dining facility patronage to participants only, thereby limiting exposure.

## **Transportation and Program Support**

- CPI/LEMIT will inquire if transportation contractors have implemented their emergency operations plans. Transportation contractors taking steps to prepare for operations in the COVID environment, will be utilized.
- The transportation contractors will implement administrative and engineering controls to provide safe transportation for participants, including:
  - Provide for the disinfection of the buses and assigned vehicles frequently (after each run), wash their hands often, and keep a six-foot social distance from each other when possible
  - Installing signage on all buses emphasizing the need to social distance, as well as clean and disinfect spaces;
  - Allowing only 20 participants at a time on a 45-passenger bus to enable social distancing. Seating one person per bench, closest to the window in each row; and
  - Adjusting passenger loads for smaller buses accordingly.

## **Training Management**

### **Training Program Modifications and Scheduling**

CPI/LEMIT recognizes the need to rapidly resume professional education and training for law enforcement agencies. To meet our partners' needs, CPI/LEMIT will take every action within its purview to mitigate risk to the individuals who work at CPI/LEMIT and those who receive our training. All activities requiring resources outlined in this plan are subject to the trajectory of COVID-19, availability of funds, and participant's own agency limitations.

- CPI/LEMIT will schedule training programs to begin starting August 3, 2020.
- CPI/LEMIT will make modifications to training programs to optimize educational success while mitigating risk to staff, instructors, and participants where possible without sacrificing training quality. This will include potentially changing sequencing of training to maximize capacity, leveraging different instructional methods such as online training delivery, and adjusting pedagogies to streamline online instructor teaching.
- CPI/LEMIT will instruct all participants to bring their own laptop or iPad to facilitate access to programs delivered online.
- CPI/LEMIT may identify any training that can be conducted online during this period, thereby reducing the time required for onsite training, developing schedules for administrative activities, etc.
- CPI/LEMIT will notify agencies and participants of arrival dates, new start dates for training, and new departure dates. CPI/LEMIT will accomplish this approximately 14 days before students are scheduled to arrive.

- CPI/LEMIT will convert identified existing on-site training to online format for delivery through the most accessible and secure software platforms available. These include mandated as well as self-selective course offerings. Additional blocks of instruction will be added based on capabilities and demand.

## **In-Person Training**

### **Program Changes**

- CPI/LEMIT will design the pairing of groups and will establish permanent participant groups. Pairing participants as partners and establishing small groups will limit exposure to one another, especially during hands-on activities.
- Participants will work training scenarios with pre-assigned partners for the duration of the training. Each partner group (two participants) will be permanently paired with another partner group (two participants) forming a core group of four. These four participants will be permitted to interact and exchange partners within the core group during certain practical exercises such as “negotiations” when variations in participant size and gender will enhance the learning experience and comprehension.
- CPI/LEMIT training currently involves a significant amount of hands-on training or training involving close proximity among participants, instructors, and role players. To the extent practicable, CPI/LEMIT will leverage videos and demonstration tables.
- CPI/LEMIT will conduct a comprehensive review of each block of instruction and will identify and implement necessary mitigating actions for lecture/lab/physical exercise.
- CPI/LEMIT will reduce or eliminate the number of role players involved in training to reduce exposure of participants to individuals moving on and off the classroom.
- CPI/LEMIT will identify wellness/physical training courses to effectively reduce participant showering within gym facilities and allow scheduled time in assigned blocks of instruction, ending the training day so participants can utilize hotel rooms to shower.
- CPI/LEMIT will issue training equipment to participants for the duration of programs where applicable. In some areas, equipment will have to be issued and returned for cleaning.
- CPI will not facilitate local area agency tours. Such tours will remain suspended until January 1, 2021.
- LEMIT will not facilitate Texas Department of Corrections (TDCJ) prison tours. An alternative to the tour is taking participants to Prison Museum instead (contact: Bill Stephens, Director, Texas Prison Museum, [bill.stephens@txprisonmuseum.org](mailto:bill.stephens@txprisonmuseum.org)).
- CPI/LEMIT will determine how and what academic assignment(s) may be provided for a participant to make up for missed class time. The assignment(s) will cover the material(s) missed and will be developed by the instructor of record. The instructor will create case studies/exams and/or other homework assignments for the participant to submit of credit.

- CPI/LEMIT will encourage participants to remain on CPI/LEMIT grounds through duration of the program or up to graduation.
- CPI/LEMIT will encourage, but not require, participants to carry concealed firearms. If the firearm is displayed, an agency badge must be prominently visible.

## Graduation

CPI/LEMIT believes it is important to recognize the education accomplishments of academic or certificate-awarding programs. Each graduation ceremony is unique in tradition and recognition. CPI/LEMIT, in coordination with its respective institutions of higher education, will carefully strategize commencement ceremonies that prioritize the health and safety of all attendees while still acknowledging the important accomplishments of participants obtaining their degree or credential during this challenging time.

## Modified In-Person Outdoor Ceremony

- **Modified In-Person Outdoor Ceremony:** Factors to consider include outdoor space size, number of attendees, and weather. Ceremonies must abide by the limits on gatherings in effect at the time. Ideas for outdoor ceremonies that comply with current executive orders and guidelines include the following:
  - Identify the largest outdoor venue in the area to allow for maximum spacing among participants. Attendees should be able to maintain a six-foot distance from each other at all times, including entering/exiting the event, excluding immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or significant others.
  - Seat graduates with enough distance (no less than six feet) from one another with a restrictive number of guests or no guests at all (for graduating students only).
  - Make available a livestream or televised broadcast of the ceremony to limit participant attendance and provide the commencement experience for guests unable to attend.
  - Suspend reception celebrations to reduce the time that attendees are exposed to each other.
  - Suspend graduation celebratory dinners the night before the graduation date.
  - Suspend graduation luncheons.
  - Discourage individuals who are sick from attending.
  - Discourage anyone from attending if they or anyone in their household are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness or have been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

- Master of ceremony shall stagger the entry and release of participants and guests and when possible, use multiple entrances and exits to limit congregating after the ceremony and allow for social distancing.
- If allowing access to restrooms, take appropriate measures to prevent congregating such as marking standing locations and assigning staff to monitor these areas.
- Mark six feet sections to help individuals understand what six feet looks
- Diplomas, awards, medals, programs, etc., where possible, should not be handed from person to person. Sharing or exchanging materials of any kind poses an increased risk of transmission/spread of COVID-19 and should be avoided.
- Diploma will be placed on a table for the participant to acknowledge and pose for a picture individually or appropriately distanced from a CPI/LEMIT administrator.
- Photographing the moment is important. In order to limit or prevent guest from overcrowding to take pictures, a staff member will take multiple pictures of all graduates and provide them free of charge to families in order to reduce concern of missing the important moments.
- Graduation brochures, agendas, invitations, and notifications will all be electronic. A link or email correspondence can be provided for information to all graduates and attendees.
- If chairs and other equipment are provided, they should not be shared and should be sanitized before and after use.
- Limit the number of speakers and the number of people on stage. Speakers must also abide by the six feet social distancing rules and should not share microphones.
- Limit or eliminate performances, particularly group performances, to help limit exposure.
- Virtual ceremonies will be prioritized until January 2021 as they:
  - Pose the safest alternative at this time.
  - Consider bandwidth and accessibility to technology for those who may be participating/viewing the virtual graduation.

## **Conclusion**

This plan should not be construed as a guarantee that training activities will restart at the stated time and/or under the conditions specified herein. CPI/LEMIT will strive to keep all parties informed of developments in projections and capabilities and will take every action within its purview to mitigate risk to our staff, instructors, and those who receive our training.

# Appendix A: Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 Screening

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CDC FACILITIES COVID-19 SCREENING</b> <small>Accessible version available at <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/screening/">https://www.cdc.gov/screening/</a></small>		
<b>PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY</b>	<b>PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER THAT APPLIES TO YOU</b>	
Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever or chills</li> <li>• cough</li> <li>• shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>• fatigue</li> <li>• muscle or body aches</li> <li>• headache</li> <li>• new loss of taste or smell</li> <li>• sore throat</li> <li>• congestion or runny nose</li> <li>• nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• diarrhea</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact (6 feet or closer for at least 15 minutes) with a person who is known to have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or with anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are you isolating or quarantining because you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Did you answer NO to ALL QUESTIONS?</b>	Access to CDC facilities <b>APPROVED</b> . Please show this to security at the facility entrance. Thank you for helping us protect you and others during this time.	
<b>Did you answer YES to ANY QUESTION?</b>	Access to CDC facilities <b>NOT APPROVED</b> . Please see Page 2 for further instructions. Thank you for helping us protect you and others during this time.	



[cdc.gov/screening](https://www.cdc.gov/screening)



[cdc.gov/screening/further-instructions.html](https://www.cdc.gov/screening/further-instructions.html)

# THE SCREENING YOU COMPLETED INDICATES THAT YOU MAY BE AT INCREASED RISK FOR COVID-19

IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, WE HOPE THAT YOU FEEL BETTER SOON!

Here are instructions for what to do next

1

If you are not already at home, please avoid contact with others and go straight home immediately.

2

Call your primary care provider or CDC's Occupational Health Clinic\* for further instructions, including information about COVID-19 testing.

3

Contact your supervisor (if you are an employee) or your contracting company (if you are a contractor) to discuss options for telework and/or leave.

Before going to a healthcare facility, please call and let them know that you may have an increased risk for COVID-19.

In case of a life-threatening medical emergency, dial 911 immediately!

## RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE



**If you have had symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19, DO NOT** physically return to work until you get a medical evaluation and are approved to return to work setting by your medical provider or—if you are involved in a CDC response—a CDC occupational health clinician. \*Please call your supervisor to discuss when to return to work. Read more about when it is safe to be around others at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>.



**If you have a chronic medical condition that causes COVID-19-like symptoms** and you need to access a CDC facility within the next few days, please call CDC's Occupational Health Clinic at 404-639-3385 to determine whether you can safely be granted access to a CDC facility.



**If you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19** you should stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days before returning to work. Read more about when you should be in isolation or quarantine at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>.



**If you are currently isolating or quarantining because of concerns about COVID-19 OR you have a COVID-19 test pending**, please contact your primary care provider for guidance on when you can return to work.