



From the Desk of the Director: COVID-19 Update

Dear colleagues,

Our employees' health is our top priority as the State navigates this public health crisis. As such, we want to share with you everything we are doing to ensure you understand the steps we take when there are confirmed cases within our workforce.

The State is taking every appropriate precaution available to limit the potential for exposure among employees in the workplace. As of today, 20 State employees across the core Executive Branch have reported testing positive for COVID-19 and are under mandatory isolation in accordance with Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) directives. We expect this number to grow due to the amount of rapid testing now available to Rhode Islanders.

The good news is that we have implemented measures within our workforce for several weeks now to ensure that employees who are coming into work are protecting themselves and those around them, including health screenings at our facilities, flexible sick leave and teleworking options.

However, in the case that an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the State takes the following critical steps to prevent the spread of the virus:

1) RIDOH orders the employee to isolate for a specified period as determined by RIDOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

2) RIDOH conducts a thorough contact tracing process to identify and notify each individual(s) who must quarantine and self-monitor for symptoms.

3) The Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) clears the impacted work area(s) used by the employee who tested positive to

undergo heightened cleaning and disinfection in accordance with CDC protocols and guidelines.

4) The State must respect the privacy rights of our employees who are exhibiting symptoms or who are directly exposed to or have COVID-19. Information about the risk to employees related to COVID-19 will be disclosed to the extent necessary to minimize the health consequences to co-workers, while complying with State and federal confidentiality laws.

While the State is taking these steps, the **best and most effective way to protect yourself is to adhere to the latest RIDOH guidance**, which includes the following:

- **Practice social distancing wherever possible and stay 6 feet apart from other people;**
- **Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol frequently;**
- **Avoid touching your face;**
- **Wear homemade face coverings or cloth masks (Ocean State Job Lot is offering free fabric to make your own mask, or you can use scarves, bandanas, T-shirts, etc.); and**
- **Make sure you stay home if you are exhibiting *any* of the [symptoms \[r20.rs6.net\]](http://r20.rs6.net) of COVID-19.**

We all have a part to play. This includes monitoring for symptoms, limiting personal contacts, and notifying your supervisors and Human Resources should you believe you've been exposed or have tested positive for COVID-19. We should all consider ourselves the first line of defense against the spread of COVID-19.

We know that you may have other questions. Attached is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet which has more information about our process and RIDOH guidance.

If you still have questions, feel free to reach out to the Division of Human Resources at doa.hrcontact@hr.ri.gov.

Sincerely,



Brett Smiley
Director
R.I. Department of Administration