
WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?



Access Point



ABOUT ACCESS POINT

Access Point is an online learning platform that helps small businesses grow and thrive across DC.

Main Street program staff are champions of providing targeted and comprehensive one-on-one technical assistance, learning sessions, and business needs workshops to the small businesses within their designated corridors. Recognizing that business needs are distinct for every owner, however, District Bridges and Rhode Island Avenue Main Street partnered to create Access Point. This online learning platform addresses the expressed pain points for businesses across DC, including:

- Limited time for in-person workshops;
- Comprehension difficulties caused by language barriers;
- Suspension of in-person technical assistance as a result of COVID-19; and
- Need for self-paced learning.

Access Point makes technical assistance more accessible for small businesses throughout DC. Through Access Point we are helping small businesses thrive and creating a more vibrant DC.

Please note that the information provided in this workbook does not, and is not intended to, replace government regulations or recommendations; instead, all information, content, and materials are for general informational purposes only.

ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

Whether you are a business owner who has experienced this situation or just want to be prepared, this workbook is designed to help you navigate the steps following a COVID-19 exposure in your business. You should pair the Access Point training video, "What do you do when an employee tests

positive for covid-19?," with this workbook, which is intended to provide a deeper understanding of the content. In this workbook, you will find a description of the key concepts discussed in the webinar paired with materials and case studies to support your decisions.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



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INTRODUCTION

Since COVID-19 hit, one of the major issues small businesses encounter is – what do you do when an employee tests positive for COVID? We research official CDC guidelines, best practices from local health agencies, and talked with business owners and managers across DC to ask how they dealt with this situation. Here's what we discovered.

4 THINGS TO DO WHEN AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

1**REPORT THE CASE**

When you are made aware, the first thing to do is let officials know. Call or email your local Department of Health and report the case. This is important to stop the further spread of the virus, which in turn will enable you to return to normal business operations. Check out page 5 of this workbook for links and contact information for the DC area.

3**COMMUNICATE WITH EMPLOYEES**

Notify employees that a co-worker has tested positive for COVID-19. For those who came in contact with the individual, encourage them to get tested and consider restricting access to your business until test results come back.

2**DETERMINE IF YOU NEED TO CLOSE YOUR BUSINESS**

According to the Center for Disease Control, most cases won't require you to shut down, but you may need to adjust opening hours to accommodate cleaning schedules, create your plan of action, or wait for employees to get tested and receive their results.

4**DECIDE IF YOU NEED TO LET THE PUBLIC KNOW**

Depending on the employee's position in your business, you may need to let your customers know, or you may wish to do so as a way to be transparent. Consider using social media or your newsletter to let customers know, in addition to signage at your physical location. This can be important for creating and maintaining trust with your loyal customers.

REPORT THE CASE



DC

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

food.safety@dc.gov
and/or
coronavirus@dc.gov
Call 202-442-5955

VA

VIRGINIA

Arlington County
ehealth@arlingtonva.us
Call 703-228-7400

Fairfax County
health@fairfaxcounty.gov
Call 703-246-2411

City of Alexandria
Call 703-746-4951

Loudoun County
health@loudoun.gov
Call 703-777-0234

MD

MARYLAND

Maryland Guide to DOH by
County:
<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/lhd-resources>

Montgomery County
HHSmail@montgomerycountymd.gov
Call 301-251-4850

Prince Georges County
Call 301-883-7879

HOW TO TELL YOUR CUSTOMERS

A few key things to consider when communicating with customers:

- When making a public announcement, include a plan of action. Don't announce that an employee has tested positive without stating how you are addressing the situation and when you anticipate offering another update or reopening.
- Frame the announcement with care for the employee and your community.

CASE STUDY: THE MIDLANDS

Beer garden on Georgia Avenue



JANUARY 11, 2021



Dear Midlands family, We found out this morning that one of our employees tested positive for COVID-19. Our heart goes out to them while they are self-quarantining. Thankfully this employee has had limited contact with guests and has not been in the restaurant since Sunday the 22nd. Midlands has been closed since Thursday the 26th for the holiday, but we will continue to be closed until all employees test negative for COVID. In the meantime, we will be deep cleaning and hiring a company for electrostatic disinfection. As always the safety of our staff and guests is of the utmost importance. We credit our employee's prompt reporting to our strict COVID-19 health and safety policy, which has allowed us to take immediate action. We thank you all for your continued support and will update you as soon as we have information on a reopening date. Stay safe, The Midlands team.

NOVEMBER 30, 2020

CASE STUDY: ELLE

Coffee shop and restaurant in Mount Pleasant

When an employee tested positive for COVID-19, Elle didn't have any policies in place. Here's how they handled the situation and moved forward:

- Management informed all of their employees and required two tests over the span of a week in order to come back to work.
- Elle contacted DC Department of Health and their call was returned within 48 hours to ask questions for contact tracing (who was exposed, who worked the closest with the person who tested positive, did anybody else have contact with the employee - customers, vendors, etc.) and request contact information for those who might have been exposed.
- Unfortunately, there wasn't any guidance on how long they should be closed for or what type of deep cleaning they should have done. They called two different companies to ask about their cleaning services and the prices were exorbitant (\$3,500). Since the virus dies on surfaces after 72 hours, the company even told them that Elle could just wait and do a deep cleanse themselves and it would be the same as theirs.
- Elle informed their customers of the incident by posting on social media and explaining they would be closed for the foreseeable future. They ended up being closed a week.

Due to this experience, Elle implemented a new policy: in addition to employees themselves, if anybody in an employee's household has been exposed to the virus, Elle employees need to get tested before returning to work.



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Elle DC

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Hi. Tonight we learned that one of our team members has tested positive for Covid-19. The employee works exclusively in the kitchen, and has not had any interactions with guests at our Take-Out window. We have reported this to DC Health and will be following all the proper steps and guidelines. That being said, we will be closed until further notice until our team gets tested and we have completed a thorough sanitation. We will be back as soon as it's safe to do so. Thank you for your continued support, we miss you already.

Love,
Your Ellë Family

DECEMBER 20, 2020




Add a comment...

Post

CASE STUDY: EACH PEACH

Woman-owned market in Mount Pleasant



Though Each Peach hasn't had a positive case on their team yet, they have policies in place and are implementing strategies for limiting exposure across their teams.

In April 2020, Each Peach moved to a podded staffing structure, with one team that works Sunday - Tuesday and every other Wednesday, and another team that works Thursday - Saturday and every other Wednesday. The two teams don't mix. The idea is that if Each Peach had a positive case on one team, they could limit exposure to the other team and keep operating. If they do have a positive case, their policy is to

close entirely for 24 - 48 hours to enable everyone exposed to get tested and deep clean the store. After negative tests are obtained, employees could return to work and they would re-open the store. All positive tests would be communicated with their customers and community. As of December 2020, they've also asked staff to get negative tests before resuming work after travel out of the immediate area.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

U.S. Food and Drug Administration - [What to Do If You Have a COVID-19 Confirmed Positive Worker or Workers Who Have Been Exposed to a Confirmed Case of COVID-19](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)
- [Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Space](#)
- [Ventilation](#)

Having an employee test positive for COVID-19 can feel like an insurmountable obstacle for your business operations, but it doesn't have to be.



WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

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