**Guidelines for Employees During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**(updated January 7, 2021)**

SMRLD’s first priority is to keep its employees and customers safe. The following guidelines are being put in place based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and recommendations from Restore Illinois Guidelines as published by the Illinois Department of Commerce. These guidelines are fluid and will change based on updated information.

**General Work Requirements**

Employees must take their temperature before they come to work every day and complete the online self-check form. Each manager will provide the appropriate link. Employees can have the link on their computers and/or directly on their cell phones. (See Tallin if assistance is needed to add the link to a cell phone.)

Employees are to maintain social distancing (6 feet) as much as possible and are required to wear a mask or other appropriate covering over their nose, mouth, and chin while at work. Here is a CDC link that provides information on masks: [Effectiveness and Types of Masks](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html) different Employees must cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw away the used tissue in a lined trash can and immediately wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or disinfect their hands with an approved hand sanitizer. Hands should be disinfected frequently. All workstations and equipment used by an employee should be disinfected at the start and end of each shift or just before the equipment or workstation is to be used by someone else.

Plexiglass barriers have been installed at work areas where employees spend most of the time assisting customers. Face shields are available and can also be used by employees assisting customers in areas where there are no barriers. Face shields do not replace face-coverings (so face coverings must still be worn). Pointers are available for use when assisting customers needing computer or printer assistance. After use by a customer, employees are to disinfect public computer keyboards, mice, chairs, tables, and the public printer keys, keyboard, monitor, and the front of the coin machine.

**Notification Requirements**

An employee must notify their manager before reporting for work and stay at home if the employee:

* thinks they have (or do have) ANY contagious illness (cold, flu, etc.)
* has unexplained COVID-19 like symptoms
* has tested positive for COVID-19
* has been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 like symptoms or even thinks they may have been have been exposed to someone with COVID-19
* has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

Under these circumstances, an employee cannot come to work or must be sent home immediately if they are already at work. If the illness or issue pertains to COVID-19, the Manager contacts the Executive Director. (Wherever the term Executive Director is used, it pertains to the Executive Director or someone else who has been designated to assume the responsibilities contained in this document.)

Managers need to [act quickly](https://hbr.org/2017/04/how-to-act-quickly-without-sacrificing-critical-thinking) to minimize the risk of the potential spread of a contagious disease. The Executive Director will contact the employee and advise the employee to contact a medical professional and, if appropriate, take a COVID-19 test. Since COVID-19 can take 2-14 days to show symptoms, an employee may not know for up to 14 days whether they are infected (or not), and will be required to self-quarantine. Self-quarantine means the employee should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions outlined by the Centers for Disease Control or a medical professional.

If the employee tests positive for COVID-19, the Executive Director will ask the employee which coworker(s) they have been in “close contact” **within the prior two weeks**. (The CDC defines “close contact” as:

* a person that has been within six feet of an infected person for a prolonged period of time” (15 minutes or more)
* a person who provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
* a person who had direct physical contact with a person (hugged or kissed them)
* a person who shared eating or drinking utensils
* a person who got droplets from someone who sneezed, coughed, or spread some other respiratory type droplets

The Executive Director will alert those who have been in close contact with the employee as soon as possible, repeat the advice given on the [CDC Website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html) for this situation, and direct them to a medical professional.

[The law is clear about confidentiality](https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/coronavirus-covid-19-employer-faqs). The Executive Director will share information with everyone who was possibly exposed at work to the employee, only if the employee tests positive. The identity of the employee will not be revealed.

The Executive Director will contact the employee via phone, Zoom, or email (if necessary). If email is the only way to contact other employees, “**Important Action Required**” will be the Subject Line.

Once the Executive Director has spoken with the employee who tested positive, others in the workplace will be notified. The name of the COVID-positive employee and the names of any close contacts will not be revealed.

Finally, the Executive Director and/or the Director willcheck in on an employee(s) affected by the coronavirus.

**Cleaning Protocols**

When possible, if it has been less than 7 days since the sick employee has been in the facility, areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person will be closed off. After 24 hours, cleaning and disinfecting will be done to minimize the potential for other employees or customers being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, Facilities or other staff will begin the disinfecting process using CDC guidelines after waiting as long as possible. During this waiting period, all outside doors and windows will be opened to increase air circulation in these areas and/or the ozone generators will be used.

If it has been 7 days or more since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection are not necessary. Routine cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted at all high-touch surfaces in the facility, following the CDC [cleaning and disinfection recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html).

**Return to Work (based on CDC recommendations)**

An employee who seeks medical attention and finds that the symptoms are due to other medical issues, can return to work but may be required to provide a medical return to work statement from a medical professional (depending on the length of time off and whether the illness was contagious).

An employee who thinks they have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 must take a test and can return to work 14 days after their last exposure to that person, if the test is negative. If the employee lives with someone who has COVID-19, that employee can return to work 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation. The 14-day time period begins again every time the employee has close contact with a person who has COVID-19. However, an employee who had close contact with someone with COVID-19 does NOT need to stay home if the employee has had a COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months, has recovered, AND remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath). If the employee tests positive, the employee must follow the protocol for testing positive with or without symptoms.

An employee who tests positive but never had symptoms can return to work after 10 days have passed since they tested positive for COVID-19. If symptoms develop after testing positive, the employee must follow the protocol for testing positive with symptoms. If a healthcare provider recommends testing, the employee should follow the guidelines established by that medical professional.

An employee who thinks or knows they have COVID-19 and has symptoms that are not severe should contact a medical professional. The employee can return to work 10 days after the symptoms first appeared, have gone 24 hours with no fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medication), AND other symptoms have improved.

An employee who is or was severely ill with COVID-19, or who has a severely weakened immune system due to a health condition or medication might need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appear. That employee will need to talk with a healthcare provider for more information.

**Additional Advice (based on CDC recommendations)**

SMRLD encourages all employees to protect himself and others by practicing the guidelines established by the CDC. The link below provides those guidelines:

[How to Protect Yourself and Others](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

Employees are highly encouraged to **quarantine** or **isolate** themselves based on CDC guidelines. These two terms are used to describe staying at home. Both quarantine and isolation are on a 24-hours basis. For example, if a quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Being in quarantine means to stay at home, separate yourself from others, monitor your health (especially your temperature, coughing, shortness of breath, or other symptoms) and follow directions from a medical professional (if appropriate). Quarantine should occur when people are waiting for test results and have not tested positive.

Being in isolation means staying away from others, even in your own home. It still includes monitoring your health (especially your temperature, coughing, shortness of breath, or other symptoms) and following directions from a medical professional (if appropriate). People should separate themselves by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and use a separate bathroom (if available). People should isolate when they have tested positive.