

**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

Policy Memorandum No. 144 (R)

September 7, 2023

TO: All Departments, Boards, Agencies, and Commissions
FROM: Gilbert A. Montañó, Chief Administrative Officer 
SUBJECT: **RESPIRATORY ILLNESS EXPOSURE CONTROL PROTOCOL FOR
CITY EMPLOYEES**

I. PURPOSE

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is publishing this policy for the City of New Orleans (City) to provide guidance and a protocol of actions to be taken should there be a public health warning for certain communicable diseases declared by the Director of the Health Department. This policy was previously entitled "Exposure Control Protocol for City Employees."

II. DEFINITIONS

Communicable Disease. The term "communicable disease" or "communicable respiratory disease" means a communicable disease for which the Director of the New Orleans Health Department has declared a public health warning.

III. POLICY

The City of New Orleans is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. In pursuit of this goal, the following Exposure Control Protocol (ECP) is provided to eliminate or minimize contagious exposure to employees and the public.

IV. RESPIRATORY ILLNESS EXPOSURE CONTROL PROTOCOL

As a rule, the City will follow the guidelines as set forth by the Louisiana Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and any other subject matter expert body.

During a communicable respiratory disease event, all employees should practice appropriate mitigation measures, such as physical distancing and masking protocols, according to the most current City of New Orleans guidelines until the event is deemed over. Factsheets will be provided by the Health Department to departmental HR representatives upon request.

Employees who have had a direct exposure to or who have tested positive for a communicable disease should follow the appropriate procedures established below.

A. Procedures for employees exposed to a positive case of a communicable respiratory disease.

If an employee is suspected of direct exposure to an individual that has tested positive for a communicable disease, the exposed employee should:

- Consult their physician for medical advice and recommended mitigation measures.
- Follow mitigation measures provided by current Health Department guidelines, such as:
 - Complying with physical distancing protocols;
 - Wearing a high-quality mask or respirator (e.g., N95) any time the employee is around others while indoors; and
 - Complying with enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- Notify their supervisor or HR representative of the suspected exposure. The employee's supervisor or HR representative will, in consultation with the Health Department, provide additional instructions and advise the employee whether they are permitted to be present at their worksite.

An employee who has a direct exposure to a communicable disease may be required to provide a medical clearance from their attending physician to their HR representative in order to attend work, depending on the nature and severity of the disease event.

If the exposed employee develops symptoms related to the communicable disease, the employee should isolate immediately, get tested, and inform their supervisor or HR representative. The employee should stay home until they know the test result.

B. Procedures for employees who have tested positive for a communicable disease.

An employee who tests positive for a communicable respiratory disease, regardless of vaccination status, shall:

- Isolate immediately following current guidance provided by the Health Department.
- Consult their physician for medical advice and recommended mitigation measures.
- Follow mitigation measures provided by current Health Department guidelines.
- Notify their supervisor or HR representative of the positive test. The employee's supervisor or HR representative will, in consultation with the Health Department, provide additional instructions and advise the employee whether they are permitted to be present at their worksite.

An employee who has tested positive for a communicable disease may be required to provide a medical clearance from their attending physician to their HR representative in order to attend work, depending on the nature and severity of the disease event.

Recommendations for isolation and mitigation measures may vary based on the nature of the employee's symptoms. For example, individuals who are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic may be approved to return to work more quickly than those with severe symptoms. In cases requiring isolation, the City may modify the use of sick leave, depending on the nature of the event.

V. HIPAA COMPLIANCE AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The City shall not discuss or reveal any employee medical records with anyone other than the individual except in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and associated regulations.

The City of New Orleans will not discriminate against any job applicant or employee based on the individual's suspected or confirmed sickness.

VI. INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this memorandum should be directed to the Department of Health at (504) 658-2500.