



**GUIDELINES FOR SYMPTOM MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES FOR COVID-19  
RELATED INFECTION AND/OR IN THE EVENT OF IDENTIFICATION OF A COVID-19 POSITIVE EMPLOYEE**

**15 JULY 2020**

**1. PURPOSE**

This COVID-19 HR Guidelines are developed, in a bid to facilitate the proper and effective application of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the COVID-19 Direction on Health and Safety in the Workplace, issued by the Minister in terms of regulation 10(8) of the National Disaster Regulations and the regulations issued in terms of Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act. This also applies to any regulations issued by Government and/or the Department of Labour, Department of Health and the NICD in this regard. These Guidelines must be read together with and applied in conjunction with any Health and Safety Procedures the company may implement from time to time as indicated above.

**2. PHASED RETURN OF EMPLOYEES**

All Employees returning to the workplace must complete a “Screening Questionnaire for Employees Returning to Work” form (ANNEXURE A) before they will be allowed to resume their duties. This will be in any of the following and/or similar circumstances where employees return to work from any level of lockdown, any period of isolation and/or any form of leave, whether paid or unpaid.

We are committed to preventing and managing all health and safety risks in the workplace and in the context of the COVID-19 disease we have a strict return to work policy and protocol. This is in line with various statutory regulations under the Disaster Management Act and its accompanying regulations. An employee may only return to work once this questionnaire has been completed and entry to the workplace has been approved.

### **3. PROCEDURE FOR SYMPTOM SCREENING AND MANAGEMENT (AS PER GUIDELINES BY DOH)**

- 3.1 Employees will be screened for COVID-19 related symptoms and report such symptoms to the designated person prior to entry into the workplace or work area in order for a decision to be made as to the staff member's continued attendance at work.
- 3.2 At the start of a shift and, if appropriate, prior to ending the shift, designated persons will confirm with employees whether they have experienced sudden onset of any of the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever/chills (or  $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  measured temperature if this is available at the workplace or site), in the past 24 hours as outlined in the symptom monitoring sheet. These are the current criteria for the identification of persons under investigation (PUI).
- 3.3 Should an employee report any of the abovementioned symptoms, s/he will immediately be removed from his/her workstation, taken to an appropriate "space" in the workplace separated from fellow employees, provided with a surgical mask and referred to the designated person at the workplace. Arrangements will be made for medical examination by a health practitioner and, if directed by the medical practitioner, make arrangements for COVID-19 testing at the closest testing centre.
- 3.4 On receiving their results, HR will notify their workplace so that the employee is managed accordingly. The workplace will proactively take steps to obtain this information to avoid any delays in reporting.
- 3.5 The employee should be managed according to either scenario 1 or 2 outlined below.
- 3.6 A positive COVID-19 test in an employee will require all potential contacts in the workplace to be assessed using scenarios 3 or 4 outlined below.
- 3.7 All employees on returning to work from any level of lockdown, any period of isolation and/or quarantine and/or any form of leave, whether paid or unpaid, must complete a "Screening Questionnaire for Employees Returning to Work" form (ANNEXURE A) before they will be allowed to resume their duties. Upon returning to work, an employee must:
- 3.8 always follow general work restrictions that include the wearing of must complete a "Screening Questionnaire for Employees Returning to Work" form (ANNEXURE A) before they will be allowed to resume their duties masks while at work, implement social distancing measures as appropriate, adherence to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette, • continued self-monitoring for symptoms, and seek medical re-evaluation if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

### **4. GUIDELINES WHEN AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 (AS PER GUIDELINES BY DOH)**

These Guidelines outline some key aspects in relation to COVID-19 that need to be considered in the workplace. The following issues will be considered and appropriately addressed in dealing with identification and management of a COVID-19 positive employee. These procedures must be read in conjunction with other relevant/updated guidelines or regulations from the National Department of Health and the Departments of Employment and Labour.

#### **4.1 Personal Health Considerations**

- 4.1.1 HR will provide prompt support and, if required and/or appropriate, provide and/or arrange counselling to the employee as per employer guidelines and/or standard operating procedures;

- 4.1.2 Promptly provide the employee with a surgical mask and relocate the employee to a secure, well ventilated area (should ideally be identified prior to such incident) if the employee presents symptoms at the workplace;
- 4.1.3 Provide or arrange for their clinical condition to be assessed by the relevant private medical practitioner with respect to their personal health care; and
- 4.1.4 If the employee does not need admission and is sent home, ensure that the employee undergoes self-isolation at home, or at a designated isolation facility identified by the employer, in line with National Department of Health guidelines.
- 4.1.5 Ensure that the employee is not discriminated against on grounds of having tested positive for COVID-19;
- 4.1.6 Note that COVID-19 personal health interventions are part of the Prescribed Minimum Benefits of the Council for Medical Schemes.

#### **4.2 Public health communicable disease procedures**

- 4.2.1 Report the personal details of the employee to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) in line with the Notifiable Medical Conditions protocols;
- 4.2.2 Ensure that the employer liaise with the appropriate authorities to initiate contact tracing of fellow employees, patient contacts, family and community by working with all relevant stakeholders such as outlined in the NICD Guidelines for case-finding, diagnosis, management and public health response in South Africa;
- 4.2.3 Assist district / provincial health authorities and the NICD to identify close contacts and facilitate quarantine and / or isolation as per the guidelines above.

#### **4.3 Infection prevention and control procedures**

- 4.3.1 Investigate and appropriately re-evaluate and/or amend prevention and control procedures and, if required and appropriate, identify Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practitioners that can advise on specific IPC procedures to be followed in the workplace. This can be accessed through the Provincial Department of Health or via the NICD Hotline 0800 029999;
- 4.3.2 If required and appropriate after proper re-evaluation, implement protocols to prevent further infection spread in the workplace to employees, clients, visitors and suppliers.
- 4.3.3 Depending on the initial investigation and the number of infected employees, this may entail temporary closure of affected work areas, for decontamination in line with the relevant regulatory authorities' guidance;

#### **4.4 Workplace related occupational health and safety procedures**

- 4.4.1 If required and appropriate, the responsible person/s (HR and/or Occupational Health and Safety) will conduct an incident-based risk assessment -find out what went wrong, identify lapses in current workplace control measures such as disinfection, personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, education/training, staff symptom screening/testing/monitoring) and take steps to address gaps;
- 4.4.2 Clean and decontaminate the area that has been identified as per COVID-19 national PC Guidelines;
- 4.4.3 Implement improved control measures based on the risk assessment, in consultation with the Health and Safety Committee and/or COVID-19 Committee;
- 4.4.4 Communicate details of the incident in accordance with appropriate communication lines that exist with management, health and safety committee and/or COVID-19 committee and co-employees including organised labour (notwithstanding respecting the confidentiality rights of the affected employee/s);

- 4.4.5 Communicate incident investigation and remedial measures taken by the employer to relevant authorities and committees;
- 4.4.6 Manage return to work of affected employees in line with protocols and special circumstances, which should include completion of isolation period, ensuring public health, personal hygiene and social distancing measures, and ongoing close symptom monitoring of the employee on their return to work. It is recommended that this is informed by the Department of Employment and Labour directive on COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety measures in workplaces COVID-19 (C19 OHS) 2020, and the NDOH's Guidelines for symptom monitoring and management of essential employees for COVID-19 related infection.

#### **4.5 Labour relations procedures**

- 4.5.1 Management and labour will use the incident to work collectively and cooperatively to safeguard employees and the workplace to prevent future lapses and incidents;
- 4.5.2 Management and organised labour will work cooperatively to address issues and strengthen labour relations to deal with challenges on an on-going basis;
- 4.5.3 Organised labour representatives, health and safety representatives and committees should provide ongoing feedback to management on areas needing attention such as control measures, access to appropriate PPE, education and training needs, health and isolation support, leave or any other issues identified by employees.

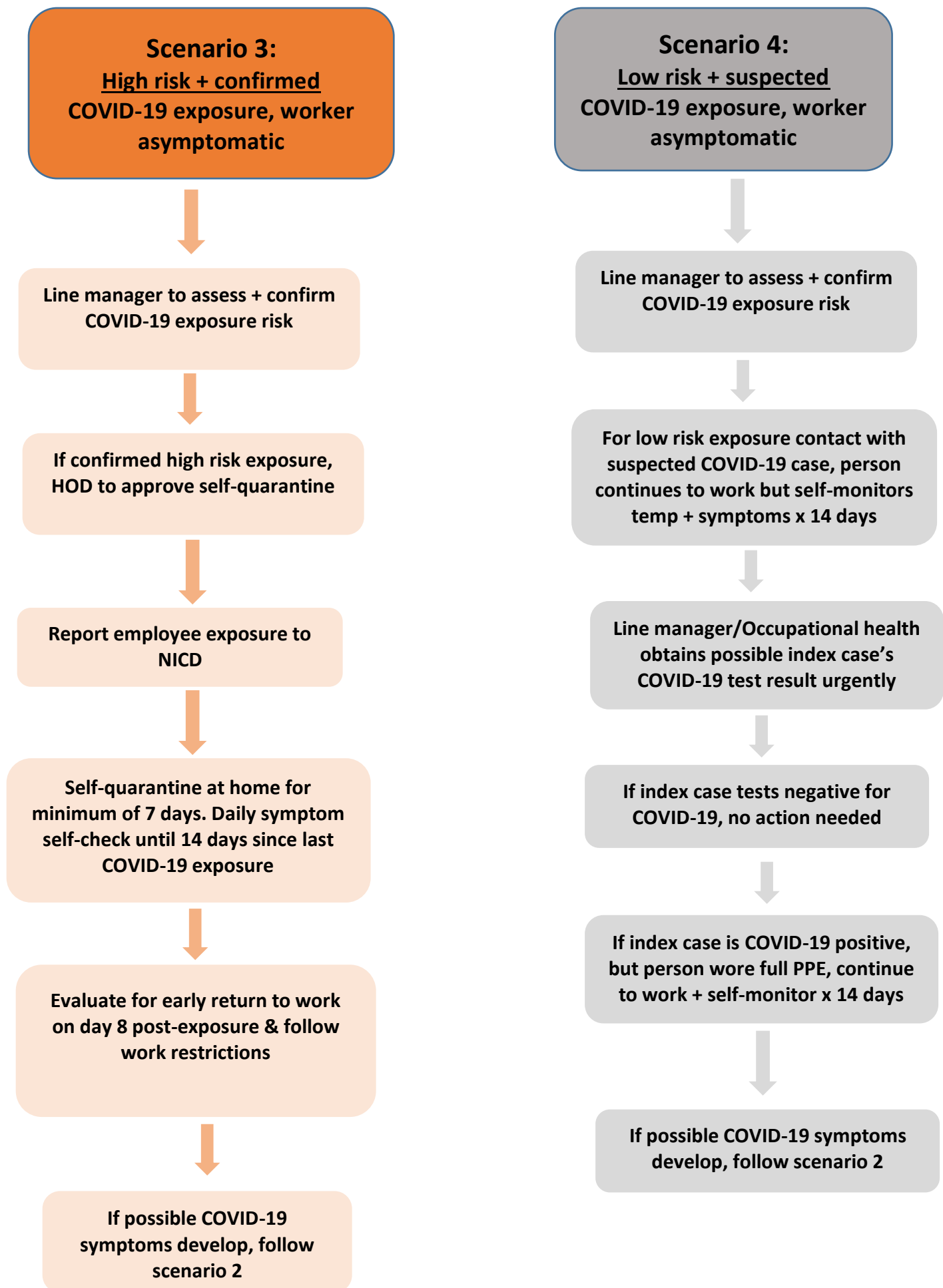
#### **4.6 Incident reporting and engagement with relevant Regulator/s**

- 4.6.1 The employer will inform the relevant authorities such as Departments of Employment and Labour and/or the relevant Provincial Department of Health public health response teams;

#### **4.7 Leave and employee's compensation arrangements**

- 4.7.1 The employer will pro-actively facilitate all applicable leave requests such as sick leave in terms of section 22 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act 75 of 1997) (BCEA). Employees who are required to self-isolate due to "close contact" with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 outside the workplace and/or in contravention of government regulations will not in any way be paid for the isolation period;
- 4.7.2 The employer will report all alleged, presumed and confirmed cases of COVID-19 related occupational disease to the Compensation Commissioner in the prescribed format using the relevant documentation as required in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993 (COIDA);
- 4.7.3 The employer will facilitate procedures for all employee's compensation benefits available to employees, including:
  - 4.7.3.1 Leave for temporary disability;
  - 4.7.3.2 Assessment by an occupational medicine practitioner / specialist in cases of complex disease that may result in permanent disability;
  - 4.7.3.3 Provision of medical aid for the testing and treatment, as well as permanent disability assessments;
  - 4.7.3.4 Compensation to dependents in case of death.





<b>Scenario 1: Worker with a confirmed positive COVID-19 test</b>	<p>To remain consistent with the advice in the NDOH clinical management of COVID-19 disease guideline<sup>3</sup>, scenario 1 (COVID-19 confirmed in a worker), will require self-isolation of employee member for 10 days after symptom onset (mild cases), 10 days after COVID-19 test was conducted (asymptomatic cases) and 10 days after clinical stability (severe cases). Should an early return to work policy be needed in future owing to severe workforce shortages, the US CDC criteria may be considered.</p>
<b>Scenario 2: Worker with current flu-like symptoms</b>	<p>Consider latest NICD and international criteria (US CDC): any employee in with direct COVID-19 contact who develops an acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat) with or without fever (&gt;38°C) or history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills) is a suspected COVID-19 case. Send employee for medical examination with a medical practitioner who will advise whether a COVID-19 test is required or not. Perform SARS-COV-2 RT-PCR testing. For employee, with a negative RT-PCR test, but high-risk COVID-19 exposure and COVID-19 compatible symptoms, discuss with occupational health/infectious diseases regarding the need for further testing and/or self-quarantine. If an alternate diagnosis is made (e.g. influenza), the criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis and duration of infectivity for the other respiratory infections.</p>
<b>Scenario 3: High risk, confirmed COVID-19 exposure asymptomatic</b>	<p><b>High risk exposure: close contact within 1 metre of a COVID-19 confirmed case for &gt;15 minutes without PPE (no face cover/eye cover) or with failure of PPE and/or direct with respiratory secretions of confirmed COVID-19 case (clinical or laboratory).</b> Line manager to assess and confirm COVID-19 exposure risk (if uncertain, refer to WHO tool for assessing exposure risk). Notify exposure to NICD. Employee member to perform daily symptom self-check and complete symptom monitoring form until 14 days since last COVID-19 exposure. If asymptomatic through day 7, consider for return to work.</p>
<b>Scenario 4: Low risk, suspected COVID-19 exposure, asymptomatic</b>	<p><b>Low risk exposure: &gt;1 meter away from a COVID-19 confirmed case for &lt;15 minutes OR within 1 meter but wearing PPE (face cover, eye cover). Also consider lower risk if COVID case was wearing a surgical mask (source control)</b> Line manager to assess and confirm COVID-19 exposure risk (if uncertain, refer to WHO tool for assessing exposure risk). For low-risk exposures to a confirmed COVID-19 positive case, worker can <b>continue to work with self-monitoring</b> (twice daily temperature and daily symptom check) for 14 days after last COVID-19 exposure. (use symptom monitoring form below).</p>

**Screening Questionnaire for Employees returning to work from  
any level of lockdown, any period of isolation and/or any form of leave, whether paid or unpaid.**

We are committed to preventing and managing all health and safety risks at our workplace and in the context of the COVID-19 disease we have a strict return to work policy and protocol. This is in line with various statutory regulations under the Disaster Management Act and its accompanying regulations. An employee may only return to work once this questionnaire has been completed and your entry has been approved.

Answer and/ or respond to each of these questions accurately and truthfully.		Yes	NO
1)	Have you in the past 7 days or are you currently experiencing any of the following symptoms – In the event that you answer yes to any of these questions, please indicate when last you experienced such and/or any related symptoms.		
	• Fever (37,5 degrees or higher);		
	• Coughing;		
	• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;		
	• Sore throat; Chills;		
	• Body aches, including headaches;		
	• Nausea, diarrhoea, or vomiting;		
	• Loss of taste of smell and		
	• Other similar symptoms.		
The following questions also must be answered by either a Yes or a No response:			
2)	Have you in the past 10 days been in close proximity to anyone who was experiencing any of the above symptoms or has experienced such since your contact?		
3)	Have you in the past 10 days been in close proximity to anyone who has tested COVID-19 positive?		
4)	Have you been tested for COVID-19 and are waiting to receive such test results?		
5)	Have you tested positive for COVID-19?		
6)	If yes to point 5, have you been without a fever or other symptoms for at least 10 days since you did your COVID-19 test?		
7)	If yes to point 5, were your symptoms “mild” in nature and has it been 10 days since symptoms started and/or since you did your COVID-19 test?		
8)	If yes to point 5, were your symptoms “severe” in nature and has it been 10 days since you have achieved clinical stability i.e. since you’ve been released from hospital and/or taken off from medically required equipment such as oxygen, ventilator, etc?		
9)	In the past 10 days have you been on a flight outside of South Africa or travelled outside of South Africa?		
10)	Is there any reason that you feel makes you a high-risk individual for contracting COVID-19 and if yes, discuss with the business representative the way forward to ensure your health and safety?		
Name			
Surname			
ID Number			

I, \_\_\_\_\_ warrant that the above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Access to workplace	Approved:		Denied:	
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