



Governance Risk and Compliance
Texas State Technical College

TSTC COVID-19 Response Protocol

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Goal:

To implement COVID-19 Exposure Response Protocols when there is a report of a confirmed case of COVID-19 on TSTC property or an off-campus exposure.

Resource Links:

- [CDC - Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation](#)
- [CDC - Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [CDC - What To Do If You are Sick](#)
- [CDC - When You Can Be Around Others](#)
- [CDC - Contact Tracing Detail](#)
- [CDC - COVID-19 Symptoms](#)
- [CDC - Public Health Recommendations](#)
- [CDC - Guidance for First Responders and Law Enforcement](#)
- [CDC - COVID-19 Testing Overview](#)
- [CDC - Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [Variation in False-Negative Rate of Reverse Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction–Based SARS-CoV-2 Tests by Time Since Exposure](#)
- [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

Need:

TSTC requires a risk management process for when an employee/student:

- Has multiple symptoms of COVID-19
- Feels healthy but has recently been exposed to a person who is being tested for COVID-19
- Feels healthy but has recently been exposed to a person who has COVID-19
- Is awaiting COVID-19 test results
- Has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Is vaccinated but has been exposed to someone with COVID-19
- Is vaccinated and is experiencing multiple symptoms of COVID-19

Justification:

Since a campus exposure event significantly impacts our campus operations, time is of the essence to enact response and recovery protocols to ensure minimal operational interruptions as possible. TSTC has identified and enabled a subset of the Emergency Operations Team (EOT) referred to as the EOT Response Team with the knowledge and tools necessary to evaluate potential exposures, initiate contact tracing protocols and act upon information gathered from immediate contact tracing, the campus ICP teams, and command structure to prevent the community spread of COVID-19 on TSTC campuses.



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Definitions:

Close Contact is defined by CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to testing specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Case - Someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Presumed Case - Someone who is considered positive but lacks confirmation by test.

Contact - Someone who had close contact with a case during or at least 2 days before case's illness.

Isolation - the act of keeping a case separate from healthy people. Typically lasts for a minimum of 10 days.

Quarantine - restricts movement and contact of healthy people who have been exposed. Typically lasts 14 days.

Fully Vaccinated Status - 2 weeks after receiving the final dose of a COVID-19 Vaccine series (either FDA approved or approved for emergency use).

COVID-19 Symptoms:

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19: ([Reference CDC](#))

- **Fever or chills**
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- **Muscle or body aches**
- Headache
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- Sore throat
- **Congestion or runny nose**
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



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Protocol 1

Procedure when an unvaccinated employee or student feels healthy but has recently had *close contact* with a person who is being tested for COVID-19:

- **Employee/Student should immediately self-report through the TSTC Employee Portal or the TSTC Student Portal using the self-report feature.**



- **Employee/Student should immediately self-quarantine** UNTIL test results of individual being tested is known: ([Reference CDC](#))
 - **If** test results are positive, **then Protocol 2** applies.
 - **If** the person being exposed is wearing a KN95 face mask **then** they will not be required to quarantine regardless of proximity.
 - **If** the person being exposed is wearing a level 1 mask and the person exposing them is not wearing a mask **then** quarantine will be based on close contact (within 6ft for 15 min or more.)
 - **If** everyone in the immediate area is wearing a face mask, regardless of type or proximity, **then** none will be required to quarantine.
 - **If** COVID-19 PCR tests are negative for the person being tested, it means that the person being tested does not have COVID-19 at the time of testing or that the test was taken too early in the infection stage. These factors will need to be considered by the EOT Response Team for the employee/student to be considered for release to return to campus. ([Reference](#))
 - Negative SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Tests are *unreliable* and will not be considered by TSTC for resolution to any quarantine or isolation period. ([Reference CDC](#))
 - **If** test results are unavailable to TSTC **then** the self-quarantine period will be 10 days from the last contact with the person being tested.
 - Employee/Student may take a COVID-19 PCR Test after 5 days and may be allowed to return to campus IF the PCR Test is negative.
- TSTC will:
 - Report to the EOT Response Team and the Contact Tracing Teams for investigation and review.
 - Have the instructor monitor affected class(es) for students showing COVID-19 -like symptoms and send students home if symptoms present. Should this occur, contact tracing procedures will be followed.
 - Have the EOT Response Team work with the department/instructor(s) to monitor the employee/student's health and identify opportunities for the work/class to be completed remotely/or made up and refer to community resources. The employee/student shall not return to campus until clearance has been granted by the EOT Response Team.



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Protocol 2

Procedure when an unvaccinated employee or student feels healthy but has recently had *close contact* with a person who has tested positive COVID-19:

- **Employee/Student should immediately self-report through the TSTC Employee Portal or the TSTC Student Portal using the self-report feature.**



- **Employee/Student should immediately self-quarantine for 10 days** based on the last date of contact with the person who has COVID-19 like symptoms AND notify their manager/instructor(s) and EOT Response Team by self-reporting. ([Reference CDC](#))
 - **If** the person being exposed is wearing a KN95 face mask **then** they will not be required to quarantine regardless of proximity.
 - **If** the person being exposed is wearing a level 1 mask and the person exposing them is not wearing a mask **then** quarantine will be based on close contact (within 6ft for 15 min or more.)
 - **If** everyone in the immediate area is wearing a face mask, regardless of type or proximity, **then** none will be required to quarantine.
 - **If** the employee/student lives with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and isolation cannot be maintained in the home, **then** the quarantine period may be extended for an additional 10 days.
 - **If** the employee/student lives on campus (Harlingen, Marshall, Sweetwater, Waco), housing staff will also be immediately notified.
 - The residence will be evaluated for isolation capability, and the resident may be moved to an isolated room.
 - During on-campus isolation, dining services will provide three meals a day.
 - Employee/Student should check their temperature frequently (keeping a log of time, date, and method) and watch for symptoms.
 - Employee/Student should stay away from people who are at high risk of getting sick from COVID-19.
 - Employee/Student who does not live in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 may take a COVID-19 PCR Test 5 days after last exposure to the person and may be allowed to return to campus IF the PCR Test is negative.
 - Negative SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Tests are *unreliable* and will not be considered by TSTC for resolution to any quarantine or isolation period. ([Reference CDC](#))



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- TSTC will:
 - Have the instructor monitor the affected class(es) for students showing COVID-19 like symptoms and send home students if symptoms are present. Should this occur, contact tracing procedures will be followed.
 - Have the EOT Response Teamwork with the department/instructor(s) to monitor the employee/student's health and identify opportunities for the work/class to be completed remotely/or made up and refer to community resources.
 - Employee/Student shall not return to campus until clearance has been granted by the EOT Response Team.

Protocol 3

Procedure when an *unvaccinated* employee or student has symptoms of COVID-19, OR is being tested for COVID-19, OR has been diagnosed with COVID-19:

- **Employee/Student should immediately self-report through the TSTC Employee Portal or through the TSTC Student Portal using the self-report feature.**



- **Employee/Student should immediately self isolate for 10 days** and notify their manager or instructor(s) and EOT Response Team by self-reporting.
 - **If employee/student has taken a COVID-19 PCR Test:**
 - **If test results are negative:** *and if PCR test was taken at least 3 days after symptoms began*, employee/student may be cleared to return to campus as long as they are not symptomatic.
 - Negative SARS-CoV-2 Antigen tests are unreliable and will not be considered. ([Reference CDC](#))
 - **If test results are positive:**
 - Positive SARS-CoV-2 Antigen and COVID-19 PCR tests are considered reliable.
 - Employee/Student may be cleared to return to campus after these three things have happened: ([Reference CDC](#))
 - Employee/Student no longer has a fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), **AND**
 - Other COVID-19 related symptoms have improved **AND**
 - 10 days have elapsed since symptoms began.



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- **Recommendations:**
 - During this time, employee/student should isolate in a specific “sick room” or area away from other people and pets.
 - If possible, use a separate bathroom but if not possible, **then** disinfect after each use.
 - If the employee/student lives on campus (Harlingen, Marshall, Sweetwater, Waco), housing staff should also be immediately notified.
 - Residence will be evaluated for isolation capability and as a result the resident may be moved to an isolated room.
 - During on-campus isolation, dining services will provide three meals a day.
- TSTC will:
 - Disinfect all exposed areas using CDC recommended disinfection techniques if applicable.
 - Implement Contact Tracing Protocols.
 - Determine, based upon information gathered from Contact Tracing, whether to temporarily suspend classes for tracing and to control community spread .
 - Employee/Student EOT Response Team will work with the department/instructor(s) to monitor the employee/student’s health and assist in identifying opportunities for the work/class to be completed remotely/or made up and refer to community resources.
 - The employee/student should not return to campus until clearance has been granted by the EOT Response Team.
 - TSTC is committed to working with local health officials throughout the process.

Protocol 4

Procedure when a VACCINATED or previously COVID-19 Positive* employee or student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 OR has symptoms of COVID-19:

- **Employee/Student should immediately self-report through the TSTC Employee Portal or through the TSTC Student Portal using the self-report feature.**



- **Previously COVID-19 Positive employee/student, within the most recent 90 day period and that can show proof of positivity, that has been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19, WILL NOT HAVE TO SELF QUARANTINE as long as they do not have COVID like symptoms.** ([Reference CDC](#)) *(Employee/Student must still self-report and get cleared by the EOT Response Team)*
- **Vaccinated employee/student that has been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19, WILL NOT HAVE TO SELF QUARANTINE as long as they have no COVID-19 like symptoms.** ([Reference CDC](#)) *(Employee/Student must still self-report and get cleared by the EOT Response Team)*



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- **Vaccinated employee/student that has COVID-19 like symptoms should immediately self isolate, notify their manager or instructor(s) and self-report. ([Reference CDC](#))**
 - **If Vaccinated employee/student has taken a COVID-19 PCR Test:**
 - **If test results are negative:** *and if PCR test was taken at least 3 days after symptoms began*, employee/student may be cleared to return to campus as long as they are not symptomatic.
 - Negative SARS-CoV-2 Antigen tests are unreliable and will not be considered. ([Reference CDC](#))
 - **If test results are positive:**
 - Positive SARS-CoV-2 Antigen tests and COVID-19 PCR tests are considered reliable.
 - Employee/student may be cleared to return to campus after these three things have happened: ([Reference CDC](#))
 - Employee/Student no longer has a fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), **AND**
 - Other COVID-19 related symptoms have improved **AND**
 - 10 days have elapsed since symptoms began.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - During this time, employee/student should isolate in a specific “sick room” or area away from other people and pets.
 - If possible, use a separate bathroom but if not possible, **then** disinfect after each use.
 - If the employee/student lives on campus (Harlingen, Marshall, Sweetwater, Waco), housing staff should also be immediately notified.
 - Residence will be evaluated for isolation capability and as a result the resident may be moved to an isolated room.
 - During on-campus isolation, dining services will provide three meals a day.
- TSTC will:
 - Disinfect all exposed areas using CDC recommended disinfection techniques if applicable.
 - Implement Contact Tracing Protocols.
 - Have EOT Response Team determine, based upon information gathered from Contact Tracing investigations and Response Team Protocols, whether to temporarily suspend classes if necessary for tracing and to control community spread.
 - EOT Response Team will work with the department/instructor(s) to monitor the employee/student’s health and assist in identifying opportunities for the work/class to be completed remotely/or made up and refer to community resources.
 - The employee/student should not return to campus until clearance has been granted by the EOT Response Team.
 - TSTC is committed to working with local health officials throughout the process.



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Notifications:

Once an employee/student discloses information that meets any of the criteria above, the following notifications should take place as soon as the individual has been asked to leave campus and self-quarantine:

1. Contact Human Resources for employees, Enrollment Management for students and the TSTC Safety Officer listed below to activate Response Protocols.
2. After these notifications have taken place, please keep information confidential and wait for further guidance from the Office of Risk Management.
3. TSTC Safety Officer will coordinate scene management.
4. EOT Response Team will coordinate contact tracing investigations as needed.