

## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF REPORTED ILLNESS OR POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19**

### **Overview**

In an effort to mitigate the spread of disease within the Caltech community, the Institute is working closely with the Pasadena Public Health Department to engage in the [isolation](#) of individuals who are ill with symptoms consistent with those of COVID-19, and to inform and initiate [quarantine](#) measures for anyone who is considered a close contact of an ill individual. The COVID-19 management team, which includes medical professionals and trained campus personnel, will facilitate the case investigation and contact tracing process.

The most effective method for reducing the risk of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19 disease is to avoid close and prolonged contact with others, especially anyone who is ill; maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from others; wear a face covering; wash hands frequently; avoid touching the mouth, nose, and face; and frequent sanitizing of high-contact surfaces. **Anyone who is ill should NOT come to campus.**

An initial report of illness is likely to be communicated to a supervisor, lab manager, faculty member, division operations officer, or other individual within the ill person's work environment (referred to below as the receiving party). It may not be immediately known whether an individual is positive for COVID-19; current public health guidelines recommend isolation for any [illness consistent with the symptoms of COVID-19](#). In addition to the ill individual following isolation guidelines, the Institute will take a series of steps to help mitigate the spread of illness within the campus community.

Immediately following an initial report of illness consistent with symptoms of COVID-19, the individual's primary workspace will be cleaned and disinfected (by custodial crew for office and common spaces, by lab personnel or other appropriate resources for laboratories) and close contacts on campus will be identified and asked to quarantine for 14 days to monitor for symptoms of illness. Once these actions have been taken, there is no specific need to shutter a building or close a laboratory or workspace; however, individual faculty and supervisors should consider the unique characteristics of the workspace and determine how best to support the operations of the unit given reduced staffing. The Caltech Safety Office has created [guidance for the cleaning and disinfection of laboratory spaces, including sensitive equipment](#).

**Everyone on campus should be following physical distancing guidelines, which will minimize the number of people defined as close contacts to any ill individual.** A close contact is defined as face-to-face contact within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, or in some cases, prolonged contact with an ill individual even with physical distancing measures in place, for a period including 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms until the implementation of isolation measures.

In the event the Institute becomes aware of several simultaneous cases of COVID-19 of unknown or untraceable origin that may constitute an outbreak, the leadership will consult with the public health department to determine if additional restrictions or proactive closures are appropriate to implement within the campus community. Additional risk mitigation measures may include the temporarily ramping down of research activities and temporary closures of non-essential campus operations, in addition to recommending testing of faculty, staff, students, and postdoctoral scholars consistent with CDC guidelines.

Per public health guidelines, it is not necessary to inform an entire building or workspace about exposure to illness unless close contacts are unable to be identified. Close contacts of the ill individual will be notified by a member of the COVID-19 management team of the exposure to illness and directed to quarantine for 14 days per the [Pasadena Public Health Officer Order](#). In rare circumstances, a determination may be made to contact all occupants of a building about a potential exposure; this will be managed on a case-by-case basis as part of the initial case investigation process.

## **Implementation Details**

### ***Notification Procedure***

Ill individuals should self-report illness through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting application in [access.caltech.edu](https://access.caltech.edu) by clicking on the “I am experiencing symptoms” button on the application landing page. If the ill individual is unable to self-report, or it is unknown whether the ill individual has reported their illness, the supervisor or manager should submit a report on the ill individual’s behalf through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting application.

Ill individuals who self-report will receive [the Guidelines for Reported Illness document](#); supervisors or managers may also distribute this to anyone who reports an illness. The COVID-19 management team will confirm that the ill individual has received the guidelines and provide the information again if necessary. This resource communicates information about isolation, testing, and contact tracing procedures consistent with the [Pasadena Public Health Officer Order](#).

### ***Case Investigation, Testing, and Contact Tracing***

A representative from the COVID-19 management team will make contact with the ill individual to begin the case investigation process; they will obtain the date of onset of illness, reinforce the isolation procedures, and obtain the names of individuals in close contact with the ill person during the infectious period. These conversations are confidential, and no personal health information will be communicated to the ill individual’s supervisor or the Institute. The ill individual will be provided with information regarding testing for COVID-19, which may be facilitated through the individual’s primary healthcare provider or county testing sites. Wellness Services will facilitate testing for graduate and undergraduate students. Ill individuals (with the exception of graduate and undergraduate students) will be referred to the Disability and Leave Unit within Human Resources for assistance with timekeeping; individuals will utilize sick leave or other paid time off, if applicable. The Disability and Leave Unit will aid individuals based on their specific circumstances. Individuals subject to an isolation order must complete the 10-day isolation period regardless of a negative result of an FDA-approved PCR test for COVID-19. During the isolation period, swipe card access to campus buildings will be restricted.

### ***Quarantine of Close Contacts***

Individuals determined to be close contacts of an ill person will be notified of the exposure and instructed to quarantine for 14 days to monitor for symptoms of illness. The name of the ill individual will not be revealed. Close contacts will be provided with information regarding testing for COVID-19, which may be facilitated through the individual’s primary healthcare provider or county testing sites. Wellness Services will facilitate testing for graduate and undergraduate students. Individuals subject to a quarantine order must complete the 14-day quarantine period regardless of a negative result of an FDA-approved PCR test for COVID-19. Individuals (with the exception of graduate and undergraduate students) directed to quarantine will be referred to the Disability and Leave Unit within Human Resources for assistance with timekeeping; if unable to work from home, individuals will utilize sick leave or other paid time off, if applicable. The Disability and Leave Unit will aid individuals based on their specific circumstances. Individuals who develop symptoms of illness during the quarantine period should [notify the COVID-19 management team](#) immediately, and will then be subject to the isolation order, beginning on the day of symptom onset.

During the quarantine and/or isolation period, swipe card access to campus buildings will be restricted.

### ***Cleaning and Disinfection of Workspace***

Generally, within 24 hours, the COVID-19 management team will work with Custodial Services to initiate cleaning and disinfection of the primary office and/or common workspaces of the ill individual, as

appropriate. If an ill individual spent a significant amount of time in a shared office, workspace, or common area (kitchen, breakroom, conference room), that area will be closed until cleaning and disinfecting is complete. The COVID-19 management team will work with the appropriate facilities, building or division administrator or other relevant personnel to post signage indicating the closure.

In some cases, laboratory spaces have sensitive equipment and are not appropriate for traditional cleaning or disinfecting; faculty and laboratory managers should have a contingency plan for cleaning/disinfecting that is consistent with the characteristics of their laboratories.

High-touch surfaces, common spaces, kitchens, breakrooms, elevators, stairwells, restrooms, office environments, and some non-hazardous laboratories are generally cleaned and sanitized frequently by custodial staff.

Workspaces utilized by an individual who becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19 are still generally safe to inhabit by other employees. The cumulative effects of frequent, routine cleaning and sanitizing, the lower incidence of fomite (surface) transmission compared to direct droplet contact, and face covering and hand hygiene practices help prevent virus accumulation and persistence in workspaces. Nonetheless, an extra cleaning and disinfecting process after a reported illness will help to ensure the highest level of control over potential viral burden in the workplace.

### ***Privacy and Campus Communications***

Identifying information (name, UID, and contact information) about an ill individual will be disclosed only to those with a specific need to know – including public health authorities, the COVID-19 management team for the purposes of contact tracing, and the Disability and Leave unit within Human Resources. Ill individuals should not disclose personal health information (symptoms, chronic health conditions, health status) to their supervisor. When speaking with an ill individual, a qualified staff member from the COVID-19 management team will inquire about the date of symptom onset and check reported symptoms against those consistent with COVID-19, as well as the presence of any risk factors associated with COVID-19, in order to provide the most relevant information to the ill individual about isolation, testing, and to support the contact tracing process. Communications with personnel from the COVID-19 management team are confidential.

In general, individual cases of illness and confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 will not be announced to the community, except in rare circumstances where the public health implications or community benefits indicate the need to do so. Some examples include an ill individual who is unable to provide immediate assistance with contact tracing; prolonged exposure in a high-trafficked communal space (e.g. Chandler or the Red Door); concern about the spread of infection that requires a change in campus operations (i.e. closing a high-trafficked space for deep cleaning); an outbreak or cluster of illness that requires broad communication to limit further spread. Campus communications will never disclose an ill individual's identity or personal health information.

### ***Returning to Work***

Individuals subject to isolation and quarantine orders will be provided instructions for returning to work on campus. The Pasadena Public Health Department requires a letter of clearance for any confirmed case of COVID-19, in order to release the individual to return to regular activities. The COVID-19 management team will collaborate with the Disability and Leave Unit within Human Resources, as well as the Pasadena Public Health Department, to facilitate the clearance of employees with a positive test for COVID-19.

Individuals who have completed a 14-day quarantine period without developing symptoms are not required to obtain letter of clearance from the Pasadena Public Health Department, but will be asked to confirm the absence of symptoms of illness to the COVID-19 management team prior to returning to regular duties. Per

public health guidelines, an individual who has been exposed to a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19 must complete the 14-day quarantine period, regardless of a negative COVID-19 test result.

## **FAQs**

1. Under what circumstances would entire buildings or the Institute shut down in the event of an outbreak? (this is explained above)
2. Does Caltech have space to accommodate staff or postdoctoral scholars in on-campus isolation and quarantine? No.
3. If I am directed to isolate or quarantine, how will I be paid? Disability and Leave will work with individuals.
4. Can I work from home if I am directed to quarantine? Yes, if able to do so.
5. How will I know if I have been exposed on campus or at Caltech-managed facility to someone who is ill? COVID-19 management team will notify you.
6. I worked in the same office/lab space with someone who is ill, but I didn't see them in person. What should I do? You're not a close contact, continue risk mitigation measures. (hygiene, distancing, health monitoring)
7. If the ill individual tests negative for COVID-19, can they return to work and are the close contacts released from quarantine? No, the ill individual and their close contacts must complete isolation and quarantine periods, regardless of negative test.
8. I work on the same floor (or nearby) someone who is ill. Do I need to return to work, even if I haven't been in direct contact with them? Yes – discuss with supervisor, but only close contacts are subject to quarantine.