

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) Guidelines COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan for Institutes of Higher Education

Note: This document is frequently updated. Please check the date on the webpage for the most recent version.

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

4/21/2023

- This update aligns with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public](#) that took effect on March 13, 2023.
- Updates also reflect the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases \(Isolation\) and Close Contacts](#) that went into effect on March 13, 2023.
- Clarifies that staff and students who are infected with COVID-19 must stay home away from others until the criteria to end isolation have been met.
- Notification of student close contacts has changed to a strong recommendation.

A targeted public health response to contain COVID-19 exposures at a community-level can help maximize the impact of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) COVID-19 response.

Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) are trusted community partners that can help LAC DPH improve the timeliness and impact of the public health response through rapid initiation of an IHE COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan (EMP). Immediate implementation of an EMP when a single case of COVID-19 is identified at an IHE can accelerate the ability to contain the spread of infection and prevent outbreaks from occurring on campus.

The steps for managing exposures to COVID-19 cases on campus are described below. The term “campus” in this document refers to non-residential settings on the IHE property and residential congregate settings that house or employ large groups of IHE students and employees, both on- and off-campus.

Exposure Management Planning Prior to Identifying COVID-19 Cases at IHE Setting

- Required:* A designated IHE COVID-19 Compliance Officer that is responsible for serving as a liaison to LAC DPH for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.
- Required:* A plan to report all IHE-associated clusters of 3 or more epidemiologically linked COVID-19 cases within 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last, case in the cluster and all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among students or staff to LAC DPH by sending a notification to [ACDC-Education@ ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov).



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Exposure Management for COVID-19 Cases at IHE Setting

- ❑ Students and staff with confirmed COVID-19 infection (cases) must stay home and away from others (isolate) and follow all isolation instructions for COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, history of previous infection, or lack of symptoms. (Refer to Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19 ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.)
 - A confirmed COVID-19 case is a person who has received a positive result of the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus as confirmed by a COVID-19 viral test or clinical diagnosis.
- ❑ Persons with symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, should isolate and test for COVID-19. Refer to LAC DPH's [Learn about Symptoms and What to do if You are Sick](#).
- ❑ Students and employees with COVID-19 can end isolation after Day 5* (i.e., between Day 6-10) if both of the following criteria are met**:
 - 1) No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, **AND**
 - 2) Other symptoms are **not present**, or symptoms are **mild and improving**

*For symptomatic students and staff, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms; Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms develop. For students and staff **who never develop symptoms**, Day 0 is the day the first positive test was collected; Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected. **Please note that if they develop symptoms, their new Day 0 is the first day of symptoms.**

** It is **strongly recommended** that an individual test negative (with an antigen test) for COVID-19 prior to ending isolation between Day 6-10 to reduce the chance of infecting others with COVID-19.

 - Persons who continue to have symptoms of COVID-19 that are not improving should continue to isolate until their symptoms are improving or until after Day 10.
 - Persons who have left isolation and have a return or worsening of their COVID-19 symptoms need to re-test (with an antigen test). If they test positive, they should re-start isolation at Day 0.
 - If a student meets the criteria to leave isolation after Day 5, the student should continue to wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others, except when eating or drinking, through Day 10, unless they have two sequential negative COVID-19 tests taken at least one day apart.
 - For staff requirements related to isolation, refer to [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#). Employers must review and follow these regulations for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in the workplace setting. Additional information may be found in the Cal/OSHA [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations FAQs](#) and DPH's [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).



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- When IHE are notified of a confirmed COVID-19 case, it is strongly recommended that they notify students who were exposed to the COVID-19 case during the case's infectious period* and provide them with actions to take for close contacts. IHE are required to notify employees if they have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19 in the workplace during the case's infectious period, as per [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#).

*The infectious period is:

- *For symptomatic confirmed cases:* Persons who have tested positive on a COVID-19 viral test or received a clinical diagnosis of COVID-19 (i.e., a confirmed case) are considered infectious starting 2 days before their symptoms began until their isolation ends (i.e., through Days 6-10 after symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines, and symptoms have improved).
- *For asymptomatic confirmed cases:* Persons who have tested positive on a COVID-19 viral test and never develop symptoms are infectious starting 2 days before their test was taken (test collection day is Day 0) until their isolation period ends (after Day 5).

- Close Contacts: Persons are considered to have been exposed to a COVID-19 case during the case's infectious period if:

In indoor airspaces that are 400,000 cubic feet or less per floor: They shared the same indoor airspace with the infected person (case) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period.

In indoor airspaces that are greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor: They were within 6 feet of the infected person (case) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period. NOTE: Spaces that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls (e.g., offices, suites, break/eating areas separated by floor-to-ceiling walls) are considered distinct indoor airspaces.

NOTE: Persons with an outdoor exposure are not considered close contacts.

- Close contacts to a COVID-19 case should take the following actions:
 - Close contacts who have or develop symptoms of COVID-19 infection, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, must stay home away from others and test for COVID-19.
 - Asymptomatic close contacts do not need to stay away from others and should take the following actions to lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others:
 - 1) Wear a well-fitting mask around others through Day 10, especially in indoor settings.
 - 2) Test for COVID-19 between Days 3-5 after the last date of exposure.
 - Close contacts who recently tested positive for COVID-19 within the prior 30 days do not need to be tested unless symptoms develop.
 - Close contacts who recently tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 31-90



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days should use an antigen test.

- Close contacts who are or live with persons at [higher risk for severe illness](#) are recommended to test as soon as possible after exposure. If testing negative before Day 3, retest during the 3-5 day window following exposure, with at least 24 hours between the first and second tests.
- Close contacts who test positive for COVID-19 stay home away from others and follow the instructions for a confirmed COVID-19 case outlined above. Refer to DPH's [Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases \(Isolation\) and Close Contacts](#).

3) Monitor their health for symptoms for 10 days after the last date of exposure. If symptoms develop, stay away from others and test immediately. If the test is positive for COVID-19, they must stay home away from others and follow the instructions for a confirmed COVID-19 case. If you test negative, follow LAC DPH's [Learn about Symptoms and What to do if You are Sick](#) guidance.

Refer to Instructions for Close Contacts for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidcontacts) for details.

- Staff who are close contacts exposed at work must follow the guidance outlined in [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#). See also DPH's [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).

- Staff may request masks and respirators from their employer at no cost to staff. See [Wear a Mask and Know your Rights](#) for more information.

- Employers must make COVID-19 testing available at no cost and during paid time in a manner that ensures employee confidentiality to staff who are close contacts. See [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations Frequently Asked Questions-Testing](#).

- IHE must notify LAC DPH of all clusters of 3 or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 (students and/or employees) who were linked (i.e., shared a defined physical space like a classroom, workspace, communal area, sports activity, IHE-sponsored gathering at the same time) and on campus at any point within a 14-day period prior to illness onset date.

- Clusters should be reported online through the secure web application, the Shared Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT): https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US. For reporting multiple cases, IHE can submit their reports using the "Bulk Upload Template" located within the SPOT Portal.
- All clusters with information for the cases should be reported to Public Health immediately, and no later than 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last, case in the cluster.
- When reporting clusters, IHE are required to include exposure location and/or group membership details, when known, to describe potential connections between the cases (e.g., dormitory name/location, classroom name/location athletic team name, gathering

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name/date, etc.) and which cases are close contacts of each other when possible.

❑ IHE Compliance Officer will work with Public Health as needed to determine whether the cases within the reported cluster are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the affected individuals were present at some point in the same setting and during the same time period while they were infectious.

❑ DPH will review the submitted information to determine whether the outbreak criteria have been met. **The outbreak criteria are:**

In IHE Non-residential Settings: At least 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period in a group with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not close contacts of each other outside of the campus. IHE groups include persons that share a common membership (e.g., Greek or other social organization, athletic teams, sports and recreation clubs, academic cohort, workplace on campus).

In IHE Residential Settings*: At least 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period in epidemiologically linked residents and/or staff within the same or multiple dwellings that share a common area.

*IHE residential settings include on- and off-campus residential housing facilities where groups of IHE students and/or employees congregate and/or reside (e.g., on-campus residences, on- or off- campus Greek housing). Epidemiologically linked cases are those that were present at some point in the same setting at the same time while one or more cases were infectious; OR a member of a risk group as defined by public health during an outbreak. This may include persons who share a defined physical space in the dwelling indicating a higher likelihood of linked spread of disease than sporadic transmission from the community.

❑ If outbreak criteria are met and DPH recommends an outbreak response, DPH will notify the IHE that an outbreak investigation is activated, and a Public Health **Outbreak** Investigator will communicate directly with the IHE to coordinate the response.

NOTE: In outbreak settings, the Public Health Outbreak Investigator may implement temporary strategies that are more protective than these guidelines to prevent further spread of COVID-19 at the site.

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 • • • • **Institutes of Higher Education**

Appendix A: Steps for Managing Exposures to COVID-19 cases in non-residential or residential congregate settings associated with IHE

1-2 Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Required: IHE notifies cases to follow isolation instructions. Cases may return when the criteria for ending isolation have been met. 2) Recommended: IHE notifies IHE close contacts of exposures and actions to take.
3+ Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Required: IHE notifies cases to follow isolation instructions. Cases may return when the criteria for ending isolation have been met. 2) Recommended: IHE notifies IHE close contacts of exposures and actions to take. 3) Required: If there is a cluster of 3 or more cases who were linked and on campus within the 14 days prior to illness onset date, IHE reports this immediately to DPH using SPOT (https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US), and no later than 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last case. Reports must include details regarding exposure location/group membership of the cases. 4) DPH determines if outbreak criteria have been met. If a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, a Public Health Outbreak Investigator will contact the IHE to coordinate the outbreak investigation.