Guidelines if an Employee is Exposed to Covid-19

As of the first week of April 2020, the CDC changed the recommendation for essential workers who may have been exposed to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. This was done to ensure essential functions (such as work provided by those individuals in the food and agricultural sectors) are not disrupted.

First, you need to determine with whom the person was exposed to and the amount of "exposure". For example, if your employee is a "close contact" (see definition for close contact below) to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or a person who is symptomatic for COVID-19, and they were in contact with that person during that persons contagious period, they should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

1. Pre-Screen: Employers should measure the worker's temperature with a non-contact thermometer and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility and the thermometer should be disinfected between worker use.

2. Regular Monitoring: As long as the worker does not have a temperature of greater than 100.0 F, or respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat), they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.

3. Wear a Facemask: The worker must wear a facemask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers should issue facemasks, such as surgical masks. Facemasks may include cloth face coverings if approved PPE is not available.

4. Social Distance: The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

5. Disinfect and Clean work spaces: Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately. (Review the CDC Fact Sheet, "Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick" for precautions your employee must take to prevent the spread of this disease" with the sick employee.) Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others at the facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time would be considered exposed.

A "close contact" is defined as being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time (right now, this is thought to be 10-30 minutes but this could change); close contact can occur while caring for, living with (or being an intimate partner with), visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).