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Franklin County School COVID-19 Guidance

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This document will serve as a comprehensive COVID-19 guidance for Franklin County Schools. Any changes or additions to school guidance will be updated and posted on FCPH website appropriately.

ODH School Guidance

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

For general questions or concerns that do not need immediate attention, please call our general information line at 614-525-3097. You can also send an email to schools@franklincountyohio.gov

To report violations of state public health orders such as facial coverings, prohibited activities, social distancing requirements and others, please use the [FCPH COVID-19 Complaint Intake Form](#).

Definition of Case

A case is an individual who has tested positive with a viral (PCR) or antigen diagnostic test, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms. Cases also include close contacts who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but may not have been tested.

Symptoms may include any of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new smell disorder, new taste disorder, fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, or congestion/runny nose.

Isolation requirements include the following:

- Must be isolated for at least 10 days after symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms have improved.

Severely immunocompromised or persons with severe illness may be infectious beyond the 10 days and should isolate for at least 20 days.

Cases who never developed symptoms may discontinue isolation 10 days after the collection date of clinical specimen.

Definition of Contact

A close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 2 days before the person had any symptoms or when specimen was collected for a COVID-19 test.

Per Ohio Department of Health, data are limited to precisely define 'prolonged exposure' to determine close contact. However, 15 minutes of cumulative close exposure can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation and as a general guideline to help define a threshold of risk. Greater durations of time likely increase exposure risk. Furthermore, per ODH, if someone has multiple brief interactions at <6 feet that would reasonably add up to approximately 15 minutes of exposure, this will count as a close contact. Other factors to consider

when definition close contact include proximity and whether the individual has symptoms (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk. If time is unknown, then exposure is assumed and those that have been exposed do need to quarantine.

In addition to anyone being within 6ft for 15 minutes or longer, any individual engaging in a contact sport with a case for any amount of time would be considered a close contact.

A contact must be quarantined for 10 days after the last/most recent contact with the case when the case was infectious. Close contacts should continue to wear their mask and monitor for symptoms through day 14. **Test results, whether a negative viral test or positive antibody test, cannot shorten the 10 days.** *Contacts that share a room/living quarters (i.e., have ongoing contact with the case) should separate if possible, but otherwise contact needs to quarantine throughout the case's isolation plus an additional 10 days after case is released from isolation if they can't separate from the case. We understand this might be difficult to do in household with younger children so in those situations it's considered continuous contact and therefore quarantine will be greater than 10 days. See the [Quarantine Section](#) on how quarantine period is calculated for different situations.*

FCPH recommends all individuals identified as a close contact with symptoms gets tested but an asymptomatic individual might choose to also get tested. COVID-19 testing is not required for close contacts but should be encouraged if the person develops symptoms. Ideally testing of asymptomatic contacts should occur at least 4-7 days after the last exposure. If a close contact tests negative and that individual does not have symptoms he or she should continue to stay home and self-quarantine away from others for 10 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 case and follow all recommendations from the health department. They should continue to wear their mask and monitor themselves for symptoms through day 14. This is important because symptoms can appear up to 14 days after exposure. A negative result before the end of the quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. Additionally, he or she does not need a repeat test unless symptoms develop.

Reporting School Data

For schools located within FCPH jurisdiction, there are two reporting requirements.

1. Nurses or a representative of the school will enter individual confirmed case information and details at <https://bit.ly/reportCV19> as soon as they receive information regarding the case. **This information will be used for contact tracing purposes and any additional follow-up we need to conduct with that school building or extracurricular activity.**
2. The Reporting Coordinator will report **within 24 hours of school becoming aware of any** staff and student case counts here: <http://bit.ly/NumbersOnly>. It is advised to report these late in the day or the following day so that the Reporting Coordinator has all of the counts for that particular day and you can submit one entry for each day. **There is no need to complete this form if you don't have cases to report.** Please be sure to select the appropriate date when making submissions.

As a note, the reporting numbers that ODH publishes are pulled from Monday-Sunday. If you have cases on Monday that are reported they will not be included in the release for that week, that data will be reported for the following week. For example, data published by ODH on 9/24/2020 will have data of cases reported within school district that were reported/submitted to FCPH from 9/14/2020-9/20/2020.

After receiving the initial case information from your school via <https://bit.ly/reportCV19>, our staff may follow-up with a phone call. While you are waiting to hear from us, we recommend that you begin to gather a list of close contacts of the case starting 48 hours before symptoms began or if the case does not have symptoms, 48 hours before the date of test collection. Review class schedules, cohort groups, before and after care program, bus information and extracurricular activities to determine where close contact might have occurred. If an entire class is considered a close contact due to being within 6 feet of the confirmed case for greater than 15 minutes, they would need to be quarantined for 10 days after the last exposure. Close contacts should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms and properly wear a mask through day 14. Schools can start excluding the list of identified close contacts immediately and provide them a copy of letter template titled 'Close contacts Who Are Being Sent Home'. Schools must follow the Ohio Department of Health Director's Order on case notification and reporting. Considerations for building closures will need to be assessed on case by case basis after reviewing case and exposure information.

Any information shared with FCPH about cases is confidential. This means that personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like a health care provider.

Anyone participating in in-person or hybrid modality should have contact tracing completed and all contacts notified of a need to quarantine. If someone is exclusively on e-learning and has not been on campus during their exposure period (2 weeks prior to illness onset) or infectious period (2 days prior to illness onset/collection date if asymptomatic until end of isolation period) then they do not have to be included in the ODH required confirmed case numbers form. If possible, the detailed confirmed case info form should still be completed. Completing the detailed confirmed case info form allows us to verify that the school is aware of the case and no contacts were identified.

School Exposure Notifications

Per ODH Director's order, schools are required to notify parents or guardians of student of the existence of a case in writing. See order below for Section 4. for required exposure notifications at the building and classroom levels.

ODH Director's Order Requiring Reporting and Notification Regarding COVID-19 Cases in K-12 Schools <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-K-12-Reporting.pdf>

Assessing Ill Students and Staff

We recommend sending a symptomatic individual home and that the parent follow up with the child's doctor for a possible alternative diagnosis or COVID-19 test order. Please see the NCH screening tool and the return to school criteria below. In the meantime, prepare for a possible

positive test by completing a contact list of whomever that individual came into close contact (less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or greater). Ensure that daily health checks are occurring. Teacher and classmates can continue attendance per schedule until positive results are confirmed and close contact is verified.

See [Child In-Person Participating Algorithm](#), the Return to School Screening tool

If the student/staff tested positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms, they must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days from the date that symptoms began, must be free of a fever for 24 hours without taking medication, and must show improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 10 days from last exposure to the case. See [Quarantine Section](#) for details.**

If the student/staff tested positive for COVID-19 and does not have symptoms, they must isolate at home for 10 days after the test was taken. If they later develop symptoms, then the 10-day isolation clock begins on the first day of symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 10 days from last exposure to the case. See [Quarantine Section](#) for details.**

If the student/staff has not been tested for COVID-19, but a medical professional believes the symptoms are due to COVID-19 OR individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 without a medical evaluation, they must stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 10 days. See [Quarantine Section](#) for details.**

If the student/staff tested negative for COVID-19 but has symptoms with no other diagnosis, the child must be free of fever for 24 hours without taking medication and must-see improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings do not need to stay home.**

If the student/staff has not been tested for COVID-19, but a medical professional believes the symptoms are due to an alternative diagnosis, such as allergies, strep throat or sinus infection, the child may return to school after being free of a fever for 24 hours without medication provided he or she has a note from the provider regarding the alternative diagnosis. **Siblings do not need to stay home. See [Alternative Diagnosis](#) for details.**

If the child has not been tested for COVID-19 and does not have an alternative diagnosis to explain the symptoms, the child must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days from the first day of symptoms, must be free of a fever for 24 hours without taking medication, and must show improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 10 days. See [Quarantine Section](#) for details.**

If the child has been tested for COVID-19 and is waiting on test results, the child must remain home and not attend school or other activities until results are confirmed. **Siblings also need to stay home from school and activities until results are confirmed.** This is based on ODH guidance that people who are exposed to people with known or suspected COVID-19 should stay home until 10 days after last exposure or until the suspected case is tested/medically cleared and determined to NOT have current SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Here is link to CDC guidance on when to end home isolation

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

If someone has been vaccinated for COVID-19 and later develops consistent symptoms of COVID-19, the current process should be followed. They need to be isolated and tested.

Alternative Diagnosis

Alternative diagnosis means a medical diagnosis obtained thru evaluation by a health care provider along with a diagnostic test (e.g. strep, influenza, RSV). Per, Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) alternative diagnosis ideally applies to non-infectious etiology (allergies) or clinically diagnosed non-viral process (strep throat).

To call something viral without diagnostic tests is not appropriate. Additionally, per NCH alternative diagnoses that are less specific, such as an upper respiratory infection or colds diagnoses and were not intended to bypass testing requirements for COVID-19.

Quarantine

General Quarantine

Along with CDC, on December 3, 2020, ODH reduced quarantine for people possibly exposed to COVID-19 to meet the specific needs of our state and considerations for local circumstance and resources.

ODH Recommended Options for Quarantine Following Possible COVID-19 Exposure

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/docs/covid-19-guidance-quarantine.pdf>

While ODH and CDC also describe an option for a 7-day quarantine with a negative test, FCPH is not supporting this option for schools.

In general, FCPH recommends anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 10 days after their last exposure to that person. They should continue to wear their mask and monitor themselves for symptoms through day 14. However, anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who meets the following criteria does **NOT** need to stay home and complete a 10-day quarantine:

- Has COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
- Has recovered **and**
- Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath)

If someone has a positive viral test (antigen or PCR only, not antibody) within the past 90 days, they DO NOT need to quarantine if exposed to another COVID-19 case. Without laboratory evidence, that individual needs to quarantine as required or determined by school contact tracing. It **cannot** be a clinical presumptive positive or epidemiologically linked case. **Please note that antibody tests do not count as diagnostic test. Evidence of positive antibodies do not allow for the quarantine exemption.**

The CDC guidance states: People who have tested positive for COVID-29 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop

new symptoms. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

CDC: When to Quarantine

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

Quarantine Related to Travel Exposures

ODH has established a travel advisory recommending those entering Ohio after travel to states reporting positive testing rates of 15% or higher for COVID-19 to self-quarantine. The advisory can be found: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory>

Quarantining due to travel to a state with a 15% or higher positivity rate can also be reduced to 10 days. Individuals with recent travel to a state with a high positivity rate (15% or higher) should continue to monitor for symptoms through 14 days.

The state positivity rate at the time the individual returned to Ohio should be used to determine if quarantine is needed (if the positivity rate was 15% or higher at the time the individual left the state, they should quarantine)

For someone that has traveled internationally, CDC recommends people should quarantine upon returning. This is even if they had to have a negative test before returning to Ohio. Franklin County recommends quarantining for 10 days after returning from international travel. The CDC provides additional information on international travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

Quarantine for Vaccinated Individuals

Vaccinated persons with an exposure to a COVID-19 case are not required to quarantine if they meet the following criteria:

- Fully vaccinated (≥ 2 weeks following second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- Within 3 months of last dose of the series
- Remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

Vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings should continue to quarantine following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Additional information can be found is available on [CDC website](#)

FCPH Quarantine Calendar

COVID-19 Quarantine

Stay Home If You Have Been Exposed



If you have been notified that you were a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, you should quarantine (stay home, not leave the house for any reason other than to seek medical care) for 10 days.

You should continue to monitor your health for symptoms until day 14, and always wear a mask.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A CLOSE CONTACT

A close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet or less of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more (combined total time) starting 2 days before their symptoms began.

This is their “infectious period”. If they don’t have symptoms, it is two days before the day they were tested for COVID-19.

Below are some scenarios to help you determine when you should stop quarantine.

IMPORTANT:

Even if you test negative, you should continue to stay home for your entire quarantine period since you could still develop symptoms later or be infected and not have signs or symptoms.

Scenario 1:

Close contact with someone who has COVID-19. This could be an exposure to a friend, neighbor or coworker, or it could be an exposure to a household contact that is able to completely isolate (stay in a separate bedroom and have no further contact with anyone else in the home) from household members. *Close contact should quarantine for 10 days from the last time they were around the case. You should continue to monitor yourself for symptoms through day 14, and always wear a mask.*

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Last close contact with person who has COVID-19	.....	.....	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

..... Last day of quarantine

Scenario 2:

Close contact with a household member diagnosed with COVID-19 and unable to avoid continual close contact. This could be due to the household member not having their own bedroom or the case needing to provide/receive care from someone else (either too young or needing medical care). *Close contact should quarantine until 10 days after the person with COVID-19 ends their isolation period.*

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Person is sick/has COVID-19	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Criteria met to end home isolation. Quarantine starts	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

..... Last day of quarantine

Scenario 3:

Close contact is under quarantine and then has an additional exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This may happen when an additional household member becomes ill. *Close contact should restart the 10 days of quarantine based on their last exposure to the most recent case.*

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Start of first quarantine	.....	.....	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

..... Last day of quarantine

..... Last day of quarantine



Franklin County
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LEARN MORE: <https://bit.ly/NotifyContacts>

K-12 Exposure in a School Quarantine Guidelines

On January 5, 2021, ODH published specific guidance for K-12 school quarantine. Effective January 14, 2021, FCPH has fully adopted this guidance for Franklin County schools. Along with CDC and ODH, FCPH is recommending 6 feet social distance for Franklin County schools.

ODH K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/covid-19-fact-sheet-k-12-exposure-and-quarantine.pdf>

Individuals (staff or children) identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case that meet the following criteria may be allowed to return to the classroom during their quarantine period (10 days):

- > School has documented COVID-19 prevention policies
- > Exposure occurred within a classroom environment or on school transportation
- > Both case and contacts were correctly wearing masks (covering the nose and mouth) at all times
- > Social distancing was maintained

Current social distancing practices should remain the same. FCPH follows the CDC & ODH definition of social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet and the CDC/ODH definition for close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes of cumulative exposure). **Contacts are still quarantined outside of classroom setting for 10 days.** As such, contacts may not participate in sports, extracurricular activities, before/after childcare, visiting with individuals outside their home, etc. The only exception is to allow the contact to continue to attend in school classroom learning.

The gold standard for social distancing is 6 feet. As schools are returning to in-person learning modalities, 6 feet is best but FCPH realizes that this may not always be feasible. Per ODH, in order to use the ODH K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines, including the modified quarantine, a minimum of 3 feet social distancing must be the standard for the school. If a school cannot observe a minimum of 3 feet of social distancing, they would not be eligible for the modified quarantine. The close contact definition does not change and anyone within 6 feet of the case for greater than 15 minutes would be identified as a close contact.

School Eligible for Modified Quarantine?			
	Less than 3 feet SD	3 feet to 6 feet SD	6 feet or more SD
Classroom & Bus	No	Yes	Yes
Non-School Setting	No	No	No

This guidance is only for exposures that occur during the classroom environment or on school transportation. If the exposure happens outside of school (exposure from a teammate, family member, childcare, etc.) the individual will need to quarantine at home and should not be permitted to attend school. A classroom environment is anything that is part of a normal day for students, including recess and gym/P.E. Busing is also included. **Sports, extracurriculars, and before/after care are not included as part of the classroom environment.**

Per ODH, during meal consumption a distance of at least 6 feet between students must be maintained. If individuals are not separated by 6 feet at lunch, **quarantine (not allowed to continue attending school) will need to occur** since masks cannot be worn while eating. If it is unable to be determined if individuals were properly wearing masks, then error on the side of caution and quarantine (not allowing to return to school).

Per ODH, athletes identified as contacts cannot return to active practice and play until after 14 days of symptom monitoring (practice, scrimmages, or games). See [Athletics/Sports Guidance](#) for additional details.

Contacts will need to be notified of their exposure by the school (letter templates are available on the FCPH website). <https://covid-19.myfcph.org/schools-childcare/k-12/>

Example

- > There may be 3 different notifications in one classroom:
 - > 10 students in the classroom, one individual tests positive.
 - > **4 students were not identified as a close contact.**
 - > Continue coming to school, **no quarantine** needed
 - > Notification of case in the classroom
 - > **3 students were identified as a close contact and were properly wearing their masks.**
 - > **Continue coming to school**, quarantine outside of school
 - > Modified quarantine notification
 - > **2 students were identified as a close contact but were not properly wearing a mask (may have been mask exempt or has the mask under their nose)**
 - > **Do not come to school**, quarantine at home
 - > Quarantine notification

Athletic/Sports Guidance

In addition to anyone being within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer, any individual engaging in a contact sport with a case for any amount of time would be considered a close contact. As outlined in Ohio's sports order, the risk of spread increases the more an athlete interacts with other athletes, the closer the physical interaction of the athletic participants, the longer the interaction, and the more sharing of equipment there is by multiple athletes, among other considerations. The risk increases when the athlete participates in a team-based practice. Competition between different teams creates more risk, with full competition between teams from different geographic areas creating the highest risk for athletes, their families and their immediate communities. See this link below to Ohio's sport order for details.

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-Sports-First-Amended-08.28.20.pdf>

To minimize the risk of coronavirus transmission, athletes should wait until 14 days of symptom

monitoring have passed to return to active practice or play, as they would not be able to social distance or wear a mask. Athletes are allowed to return to class sooner (after 10 days) as there they can social distance (at least 6 feet) and wear a mask when around others.

This remains the guidance regardless if someone was exposed in the classroom, and is permitted to continue to attend school, or outside of the classroom and is quarantining at home. Individuals exposed at school may continue to attend school (see [K-12 Exposure in a School Quarantine Guidelines](#) for more details) but should wait until after day 14 before returning to active practice or play.

When an athlete or coach is identified as a being a case of COVID-19, it is the school's responsibility to notify contacts potentially exposed, including notifying another school/district if exposure to that school district may have occurred. This notification needs to happen in a timely manner, such as 24-48 hours, so that appropriate contact tracing can occur.

Coaches may return to coaching duties after their 10 day quarantine if they are able to properly wear a mask at all times and social distance (6 feet) from others. If they are unable to meet these requirements they should not return to coaching until after day 14 of symptom monitoring.

Facial Coverings

FCPH has facial covering information at <https://covid-19.myfcph.org/protect-yourself-others/>. The CDC has also provided guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

In addition to the ODH Order for facial coverings in school settings (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-K-12-facial-coverings.pdf>), the ODH K-12 Schools guidance document provides additional details on facial coverings (see page 13): <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

Close contacts of someone diagnosed as having COVID-19 (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes cumulatively) need to quarantine. Per the CDC, this is for all community exposures to COVID-19 (excludes a healthcare worker that is exposed in a healthcare facility). Outside of school exposures, this is irrespective of whether the person with COVID-19 or the contact was wearing a mask or whether the contact was wearing respiratory personal protective equipment (PPE). More information can be found: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

For exposures that occur in a school setting, see [K-12 Exposure in a School Quarantine Guidelines](#)

Essential Worker

Close contacts of a COVID-19 case are required to quarantine for 10 days after their last exposure to the case (see [Quarantine](#) for details). Essential workers, as defined by US Department of Homeland Security, who are considered a close contact of a confirmed/probable case of COVID-19, and are not experiencing any symptoms (asymptomatic) may return back to work if approved by their employer during their quarantine period. School staff have been identified as essential workers.

As a matter of policy, if an employer, like schools, that employs essential workers, determines it is appropriate and necessary to utilize this federal guidance for continuity of operations, the

employer shall consult with Franklin County Public Health prior to implementing. **Employers, including schools, are encouraged to exercise caution and considerable deliberation and implement this as a policy of last resort.**

This guidance is only applicable to staff that live in the Franklin County Health District (excludes the City of Columbus and Worthington). Essential workers who live in another Local Health District and are under an Order of Quarantine may only return back to work if approved by their employer during their quarantine period and are released by the quarantining Local Health District.

Close contacts identified as essential workers are still under quarantine, they are only permitted to continuing working as long as they are asymptomatic. If they begin experiencing symptoms they need to isolate at home (leave work immediately) and it is recommended they seek testing.

General Guidance on Essential Worker

- Quarantine means that they should not come into contact with other people, which includes any type of public setting other than work.
- The quarantined employee remains symptom free.
- The quarantined employee must take his/her temperature before reporting to work each day and not report to work if their temperature is above 100.4 degree Fahrenheit.
- The quarantined employee must report any symptoms to the employer immediately and not report to work if they develop any symptoms.
- The quarantined employee must wear a facemask while in the workplace,
- The quarantined employee must maintain 6 feet of social distancing as work duties permit.
- All areas the quarantined employee works in must be cleaned and disinfected routinely.

Additional CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>