



## **COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures Revised March 24, 2022**

With the lifting of Amherst's mask mandate on March 10, 2022, the COVID-19 prevention protocols in Town buildings for employees and volunteers have been updated. The updated protocols follow Massachusetts Department of Public Health [Mask Advisory for Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Residents](#), and the CDC's COVID-19 [Community Level Prevention Steps](#), and were developed with the advice of the Amherst Health Department.

### **Guidance for Town of Amherst Employees exposed to COVID-19:**

#### **COVID-19 Positive**

An employee with a positive COVID-19 test or diagnosis should notify their Department Head, Supervisor, or the Human Resources Department who will manage the absence from the work place and notify the Health Department. The Health Department will then conduct case management, contact tracing at the work place, and offer any guidance or support. An employee who has a positive COVID-19 test or diagnosis should not be at work and must isolate whether they are vaccinated or not. Employees should stay home for at least 5 days. If you are returning on day 6 – 10 of isolation, a **KN95** mask should be worn at all times, even at your desk, except when actively eating. Contact the Health Department or go to the DPH [webpage](#) for isolation guidelines, and speak with your primary care provider regarding your health and whether you qualify for antiviral medication.

#### **COVID-19 Exposure - (but not tested positive)**

Employees should notify their Department Head, Supervisor, or the Human Resources Department if they are considered a close contact or exposed to COVID-19. An employee is considered a close contact if they have been within 6 feet of a positive/contagious person, indoors, for 15 minutes (cumulative in a 24-hour period). There are different options for quarantine dependent on circumstance such as vaccination status and ability to wear a mask. Contact the Health Department or go to the DPH [webpage](#) for quarantine guidance.

### **Work-site Protocols**

**1. Illnesses:** Stay home if you are ill or symptomatic and report to your Department Head, Supervisor, or the Human Resources Department. Speak with your primary care provider if needed, as symptoms may indicate COVID-19 or another virus or bacteria. If you have a concern about a fellow employee and their symptoms or status, please speak privately with your Department Head, Supervisor, or the Human Resources Department. Below is a list of COVID-19 symptoms which staff should monitor for themselves.



### COVID-19 symptoms list

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies), *when in combination with other symptoms*

**2.Masks:** Wearing a face mask in Town buildings or during job related duties is optional. Please respect an individual's decision to wear, or not wear a mask, and consider having a mask ready if a community member asks you to put one on indoors. Remember, not all masks provide the same filtration, KN95 or KF94 masks provide the highest filtration and, thus, protection. These masks are followed by procedural masks with multiple layers. Be sure to choose a well fitted mask. If you are returning on day 6 – 10 of isolation, a **KN95** mask should be worn at all times, even at your desk, except when actively eating. Please contact the Human Resources Department for availability of KN95 or procedural masks.

**3.Physical Distancing:** Six feet of physical distancing is encouraged when possible. Employees who believe they are not able to keep 6 feet distancing during their job requirements, duties, or work interactions and have concerns, should speak with their Department Head, Supervisor, or the Human Resources Department.

**4.COVID-19 Testing:** Rapid Antigen tests are available for employees and can be obtained from the Health Department dependent on supplies. You may receive Rapid Antigen tests to use at home, or you may have a 'proctored' test and have it performed in the Health Department. Rapid Antigen tests may not be performed at work, inside, or in the presence of other people. A positive COVID-19 test may qualify you for antiviral medication. Speak to your primary care provider to determine if medication is appropriate.

**5.Vaccination:** The CDC states that COVID-19 vaccinations remain one of the most effective tools we have to prevent severe illness, help reduce transmission, and improve public health. Make sure you are up to date with your vaccines and have received the optimal



number of vaccine doses. Vaccination clinics are held regularly at the Health Department. You can register in advance or simply walk in.

**Additional Mitigation Strategies:** Ventilation is an important prevention strategy. By increasing air flow in the work space, virus particles can be prevented from accumulating. Continue to remember established, effective practices such as washing your hands for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer with 70% isopropanol, avoid touching your face and eyes, clean high touch work surfaces, and don't share food or water bottles.

**Travelers** are encouraged to consult and follow the CDC's guidelines and requirements for travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>