

# RETURN TO WORK PROCEDURES

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## Interactive guide for COVID-19 Response



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# Return to Work Procedures

## A NOTE TO ALL READERS

The information contained in these St. Joseph County Return to Work Procedures represents St. Joseph County current practices regarding the recommended operation of its locations where and when permitted by law, during this time of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our employees and public is our number one priority, and our hope in sharing this information is that it may be of assistance to others.

## DISCLAIMER - LEGAL STATEMENT

Please be advised that some or all the information contained in this document may not be applicable to other businesses or places of work. We strongly recommend that before implementing any of the ideas contained herein you carefully evaluate and consult with outside legal counsel as appropriate the legality, applicability and potential efficacy of this information in your place of business. Please also note that this is a “living” document that may be updated at any time by St Joseph County given the fluidity of this situation. St Joseph County bears no responsibility for any circumstances arising out of or related to the adoption, or decision not to adopt, any of the practices or procedures contained in the St Joseph County Return to Work Procedures.

These Procedures are to be used as a Recommended

Practice Guideline and aligns with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) World Health Organization (WHO) and OSHA recommendations to the greatest extent possible.

This is a working document and will be updated to reflect changes in directives and introduce new recommended practices as they become available.

The Return-to-Work Procedures provide general recommendations for use in all St. Joseph County locations. Because there may be circumstances unique to a location, there may be some cases in which your department might need to deviate from the recommendations of the procedures to address specific requirements. Such exceptions shall be authorized by Department Elected Official or Department Head. Additionally, all locations must comply with all applicable laws. If there is a conflict between the recommendations in the Return-to-Work Procedures and the applicable law, the facility must follow the applicable law.

The following standards are implemented to ensure a safe and healthy work environment as employees begin to return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Self-Screening Protocol

All employees are being asked to routinely screen for COVID-19 symptoms. For the health and safety of everyone, we trust you will be compliant and truthful in your self-assessment. Before leaving for a work, each employee should answer the questions below. If an employee answers yes to any of the questions, they should contact their supervisor. Updated 08/27/2021.

1. Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past 10 days – not related to any other cause diagnosed by a healthcare provider: cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; sore throat; new loss of taste or smell; congestion or runny nose?
2. Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past 10 days – not related to any other cause diagnosed by a healthcare provider: fever or chills; Muscle or body aches; fatigue; headache?  
If these symptoms are related to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine within the last 72hrs, answer NO.
3. Have you used medication to reduce a fever in the last 24 hours?
4. In the last 14 days, have you been in close contact or live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or, have you been in close contact with someone who has been tested positive for COVID-19?  
Close contact is defined  
*Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period\* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.* If you have already received your own positive COVID-19 diagnosis within the last 90 days, answer NO. If employee working within housing facilities and health department fall under different CDC guidance and you should answer NO if close contact was within working criteria. If it has been more than 14 days since you were FULLY vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine (received the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna or received a single-dose of J&J) see guideline for full vaccinated close contact.
5. Do you have a fever of 100 or above?
6. Have you received your FIRST positive test or COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 10 days?

If an employee answers yes to any of the questions while in an office setting, they should contact their supervisor to discuss next steps, and call their health care provider. [Other symptoms of COVID-19](#). If sick, an employee should [stay home](#).

### \*Housing facilities will have further guidelines

**Employees Not Presenting Symptoms:** If an employee does not have symptoms, they should proceed to work as normal.

### Employees Presenting Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19: REVISED 12/27/2021

If an employee has symptoms that do not correspond to a known cause verified by medical professional (asthma, chronic sinusitis, allergies, etc.) and they have been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

[CDC Updates and Shortens Recommended Isolation and Quarantine Period for General Population | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC](#)

If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)

#### **Everyone, regardless of vaccination status.**

- Stay home for 5 days.
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

*If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.*

If You Were Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

#### **If you:**

Have been boosted

#### **OR**

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months

#### **OR**

Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.

*If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home.*

#### **If you:**

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted

#### **OR**

Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted

#### **OR**

Are unvaccinated

- Stay home for 5 days. After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If you can't quarantine you must wear a mask for 10 days.
- Test on day 5 if possible.

*If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home*

Department Heads and Supervisors will work with employees on a return to work date per new guidelines.

The Employee Clinic is available to all St Joseph County employees call (574) 855-1420

**UPDATED 11/2021** COVID Testing now available with symptoms clinic staff will review and set appointment for rapid test.

### Leave of Absence- REVISED 03/31/2021

If an employee answers yes to any of the Self Screening questions, they should contact their supervisor. Employee should complete self-screening questions daily. If sick [stay home](#) If absence is due to COVID-19 related reasons, the County has allowed all options of available benefit time to be used.

Contact Human Resource Department for your available options of LOA if out more than 2 weeks or hospitalized. (574)235-1815

Leave available under Families First Coronavirus Response Act. (FFCRA, EPSL, and E-FMLA) Has ended.

### Vaccines -CDC update 08/23/2021

find Locations - <https://vaccine.coronavirus.in.gov/en-US/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vaccinefinder/about.html>

**NOTICE:** [FDA has granted full approval](#) for Pfizer-BioNTech (COMIRNATY) COVID-19 Vaccine. CDC's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is meeting on Monday, August 30, 2021](#), to discuss its updated recommendation for this vaccine.

[COVID-19 vaccines](#) are effective at protecting you from getting sick even after you have had COVID-19. Vaccination is an important tool to help us get back to normal. This information will help you prepare for your COVID-19 vaccination. Learn more about the different types of COVID-19 vaccines and [how they work](#).

- [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) COVID-19 Vaccine
- [Moderna](#) COVID-19 Vaccine
- [Johnson & Johnson's Janssen](#) COVID-19 Vaccine

Getting a vaccine will help protect you, help protect others, and help end the pandemic. More vaccinations equals fewer infections and fewer variants. Previously, certain groups were prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination. Now, all people in the United States age 12 and older are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines are free and increasingly available. To find a [vaccination provider](#) near you, visit [Vaccine Finder](#)<sup>external icon</sup> or your [state or local public health department](#) website.

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes two weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19. That means it is possible a person could still get COVID-19 before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to provide protection. People are considered fully protected two weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or two weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

You should get a COVID-19 vaccine, even if you have already had COVID-19 because:

Research has not yet shown how long you are protected from getting COVID-19 again after you recover from COVID-19.

- Vaccination helps protect you even if you've already had COVID-19.

Evidence is emerging that people **get better protection by being fully vaccinated** compared with having had COVID-19. [One study](#) showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than 2 times as likely than fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again. Learn more about [why getting vaccinated is a safer way to build protection](#) than getting infected.

You should keep using all the tools available to protect yourself and others until you are fully vaccinated. After you are fully vaccinated, you may be able to start doing some things you had stopped doing because of the pandemic. Learn more about what you can do [when you have been fully vaccinated](#).

Get the Vaccine

Wear a Mask

Stay 6 Feet Away

Wash Hands

### Face Covering Protocol-Updated Aug 13, 2021

If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.

- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
  - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. They should continue to take all [precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask](#), until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- If you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).
- If you are fully vaccinated, see [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#).

[Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is required](#) on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Travelers are not required to wear a mask in outdoor areas of a conveyance (like on open deck areas of a ferry or the uncovered top deck of a bus).

County has mask available to all employees available thru Procurement Department.

If employees have concerns with face covering please contact Human Resource Director.

### Social Distancing Protocol

Social distancing is a simple yet very effective mechanism to prevent potential infection, that relies on physical distance to avoid infection.

In practice this means:

- Staying 6 feet away from others as a normal practice
- Eliminating physical contact with others, such as handshakes with coworkers, visitors, or friends
- Avoiding touching surfaces touched by others, to the extent feasible
- Avoiding anyone who appears to be sick, or who is coughing or sneezing

This practice of social distancing includes but is not limited to common areas, entrance/exit areas of work locations, and offices. These are examples, but the principle of social distancing is universally applicable.

## Visitor Policies

- Before entering the building, each visitor should read the [public-facing sign](#) (also available: [Spanish version](#)) at all public entrances asking visitors to self-screen for symptoms before entering. If a visitor is experiencing symptoms, employees should help visitors understand alternative ways to obtain the service needed.
- All locations should ensure the public-facing sign is posted on all public entrances.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided to all offices for further distribution and will be available in public spaces by elevator.
- Social distancing guidelines should be maintained.
- Physical barriers such as plexiglass screens or sneeze guards will be used where available and appropriate.

## Workplace Cleanliness

Employees should be disinfecting at least 2 times a day; once in the morning and in the afternoon at minimum. Make sure to include doorknobs, handles, countertops, phones, keyboards and common touchpoints in the office when disinfecting the work areas. With this being put in place housekeeping will not be coming into offices. Housekeeping will be cleaning and disinfecting bathrooms, elevators, common areas and touchpoints both day and night shifts.

- All internal doors will be propped open if it is safe to do so. This decreases the need for individuals to touch door handles and maximizes air flow in office spaces.
- Hand sanitizer will be located on each floor by elevators and have been provided to departments.
- Employees may bring their own hand sanitizer and additional cleaning supplies, if desired.
- Employees should [wash hands](#) regularly throughout the course of the workday.
- Water fountains will not be available at this time.
- Employees will be responsible for cleaning their personal desk spaces
- Establish a routine for cleaning [frequently touched surfaces](#) within department multiple times a day.
- Employees should sanitize and disinfect all areas with special attention to:
  - Tools
  - Copiers, fax machines
  - Timeclock
  - Lockers
  - Common surface areas
  - Computer screens, keyboards and phones
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and was in their workspace 72 hours prior to taking the test, the Housekeeping Specialist shall assist in arranging a disinfecting of the space where needed. The limited impacted area should be evacuated, and employees may return to the area 48 hours once the disinfecting has been completed. As routine workplace cleaning would have been done multiple times a day.
- Cleaning will be performed in compliance with the latest CDC guidelines.

Procurement Department can assist department in locating needed supplies. (574)235-9776

## Choosing Safer Activities

- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, it is recommended you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
  - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. They should continue to take all [precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask](#), until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- If you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).
- If you are fully vaccinated, see [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#).

## Employee Assistance Program with [New Avenues](#) 800-731-6501 or 574-232-2131

Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work. Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other [strong emotions](#) can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to [burnout](#). How you cope with these emotions and stress can affect your well-being, the well-being of the people you care about, your workplace, and your community. During this pandemic, it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help. Recognize the symptoms of stress you may be experiencing.

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Follow these tips to build resilience and manage stress.

- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible ideally one that is like your schedule before the pandemic.
  - Keep a regular [sleep schedule](#).
  - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
  - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
  - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
  - Practice [mindfulness techniques](#).
  - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.

- Know [the facts](#) about COVID-19. Be informed about how to [protect yourself and others](#). Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with others.
- Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.
- Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you.
  - Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
  - Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as [depression and anxiety](#).
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
- If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms.