

Information on Covid-19

Monday, September 29th, 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

— What is the health-related guidance when a work area has proved to be contaminated ?

(confirmed case) or in case of risk of contamination (“contact”)

The employer, along with the occupational health, must set up an appropriate procedure for taking charge of employees exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 or employees who have been in contact with someone exhibiting symptoms.

In order to help identifying “contacts” in the event of a confirmed case, a record of contacts and their role shall be elaborated.

When an employee is exhibiting symptoms, (particularly fever and/or cough, difficulty breathing, speaking, swallowing, loss of smell and taste), the protocol must be as follows:

- Isolation (for at least 7 days, and in case of a positive test result, until further notice from the doctor)
- Arrange to have a test and watch health condition (respiratory condition)
- Drawing up the list of “contacts”.

When an employee does not have symptoms, but has been in contact with a person who has had a positive test result for COVID-19, protocol must be as follows:

- Isolation (for at least 7 days)
- Arrange to have a test
- Watch health conditions (temperature measurement)

What is a contact ?

A ‘contact’ is a person who, in the absence of effective protective measures for the entire duration of the contact (protective glass, surgical mask or FFP2 worn by the contaminated person AND by the “contact” person) has:

- spent significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- had face-to-face contact within one meter, regardless of the duration with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- shared a confined space (office, personal vehicle) with someone who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes, or, who has had face-to-face contact being coughed on.

After taking charge of the employee, employers must contact the occupational health service and follow its instructions, including for the cleaning of the workplace and the monitoring of employees.

In the event of contamination, the following measures should be taken, as the coronavirus can likely survive for three hours on dry surfaces:

- Equip those in charge of cleaning floors and surfaces with single-use lab coats, cleaning gloves
- Floor upkeep: opt preferably for a wet washing-disinfection strategy (single-use washing strip soaked in detergent product; rinse using water from drinking water system, using another single-use washing strip; allow adequate drying time; disinfect using a chlorine-based product with a single-use washing strip).
- Waste generated by the contaminated person can be disposed of via the usual method.

Allow employees who has tested positive to take time off work in case they develop symptoms (depending on the physician’s advice) or work from home (suspected contamination or asymptomatic case). If teleworking is not possible, the asymptomatic person or the “contact” may benefit from the short time working mechanism or paid leave of absence. Working patterns will need to be reconsidered and the situation monitored for at least 7 days.

The mere fact that an employee has been contaminated is not enough, subject to the sovereign opinion of the courts, to be construed as reasonable grounds to exercise the right of withdrawal.

For more information, please visit:

<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/l-actualite-du-ministere/article/coronavirus-questions-reponses-pour-les-entreprises-et-les-salaries>

<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus#partie7n5>

<https://code.travail.gouv.fr/dossiers/ministere-du-travail-notre-dossier-sur-le-coronavirus>

<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiqués-de-presse/article/protocole-national-de-deconfinement-pour-les-entreprises-pour-assurer-la>

