

# COVID-19: CONTACT TRACING IN THE UN WORKPLACE

29 July 2020

## Background

This document outlines the key steps needed to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing in the workplace setting.

**Contact tracing** is the process of identifying, assessing, and managing people who have been exposed to a disease to prevent onward transmission. It is an essential public health tool for controlling infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19. It is important to identify contacts and move them to quarantine as fast as possible.

In essence, contact tracing identifies individuals who may have been exposed to the virus, separates them from others (i.e. quarantine), and monitors them daily for 14 days from the last point of exposure for any symptoms that may develop, in which case isolation, diagnostic testing and clinical management (ranging from supportive home based care to critical care) is required.

Note that the below recommendations should be adapted in accordance with local health authorities' regulations and local WHO office guidance.

## Step by Step Guide to Conducting Contact Tracing in the Workplace

1. UN personnel should notify human resources/supervisor/DHMOSH that they are a **confirmed lab positive COVID-19** case as soon as possible. The case could be symptomatic or asymptomatic.
2. Contact tracing team is notified about the COVID-19 lab positive UN personnel who is now considered a **case**.
3. Contact tracers should get in touch with and interview the UN personnel who is a case either by phone (preferred method) or in person.
  - a. Contact tracers should **review symptoms** of the UN personnel in relation to dates and times at work (as contact tracing needs to start from **two days before symptom onset up until 14 days after symptom onset** – see WHO definition below of contact, or local health authorities' definition of contact).
  - b. A list of contacts that fits the WHO or local health case definition is created in discussion with the UN personnel. These contact names form what is called the "**Line List**". Such a document should be saved as part of record keeping.

### **Please note:**

- Knowledge of WHO<sup>1</sup>/local health authorities' case definition for contact is critical to creating a proper line list.

<sup>1</sup> WHO definition of a case and contact of COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-covid-19-caused-by-human-infection-with-covid-19-virus-interim-guidance>

- WHO guidelines stipulate that a “**contact**” is defined as anyone with any of the following exposures to a COVID-19 case from 2 days before to 14 days after the case's onset of illness:
    - Being within 1 meter of a COVID-19 case for >15 minutes
    - Direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case
    - Providing direct care for a patient with COVID-19 disease without using proper PPE
    - Other definitions as indicated by local risk assessment.
  - **Table 1** at <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/contact-tracing-in-the-context-of-covid-19> describes other example scenarios.
  - **Table 2** outlines the **key information required on the contact tracing form**. Available at <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/contact-tracing-in-the-context-of-covid-19>
4. Contact tracing team should systematically call all the UN personnel-contacts in the “line list” and advise them to be quarantined for 14 days. Information may be also provided to their managers as needed.
  5. For all identified contacts, monitoring of symptoms should be done daily during the 14-day quarantine. This can be through direct monitoring by the contact tracing team (with twice daily check-ins by phone or in person) or via self-reporting (i.e. when the contact self monitors and reports in daily even if there are no signs or symptoms). A sample temperate and symptom log is available for use at:  
[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/coronavirus\\_comms\\_tempsymptomlog.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/coronavirus_comms_tempsymptomlog.pdf)
  6. If any of the contacts develop symptoms, the individual should be advised to immediately isolate and follow the established referral pathway for testing and treatment in your duty station/area.

**Reference:** <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/contact-tracing-in-the-context-of-covid-19>