



Marine Rescue NSW – Guidance Note

6 January 2022

Testing and isolation guidance for Units with COVID-19 cases and close contacts

The isolation period for COVID-19 cases has been standardised by government regardless of vaccination status to a length of 7 days from the date of their positive test.

Household contacts or household-like contacts, except in exceptional circumstances, must quarantine for 7 days after last exposure to a case regardless of vaccination status and monitor for symptoms for a further 7 days and repeat testing if symptoms occur.

Other contacts who have been potentially exposed to a case but who are at lower risk of infection must monitor for symptoms and only need to have a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) or Nose and Throat (PCR) test if symptoms occur.

All contacts should wear a mask when outside home, monitor symptoms and avoid visiting high risk settings for 14 days following exposure to reduce their risk of transmission to others.

If members choose to have a RAT which returns a positive result, there is no longer a requirement for a PCR test to confirm a positive rapid antigen test result.

What MRNSW Units need to do if a member who has attended the workplace has tested positive to COVID-19.

MRNSW might be notified that a member who has attended the workplace has tested positive for COVID-19 by:

- the member who has tested positive
- an employer of a worker who visits the MR workplace
- public health authorities.

It's important to note that the privacy and confidentiality of the person who tested positive for COVID-19 must always be maintained.

Members MUST notify their Unit Commander or appropriate person within their unit if they return a positive COVID-19 result and have been on duty while infectious, or have an upcoming duty that they will not be able to undertake. This will allow for suitable review of any member exposure and potential unit capability issues.

Unit Actions:

1. Advise the member who has tested positive for COVID-19 to return home directly and follow the advice from NSW Health. www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-confirmed.aspx
2. Ensure the safety of the workplace and members, for example by cleaning and disinfecting all areas used by the person who tested positive for COVID-19. See further information on cleaning the workplace. <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning>
3. Notify SafeWork NSW if a member attended with workplace while infectious with COVID or contracted COVID in the workplace. <https://covid.safework.nsw.gov.au/forms/9377>. SafeWork NSW may share this information with NSW Health to assist the contact tracing and management of COVID-19. Contact Members Services for additional support if required. Forward a copy of completed SafeWork NSW form to Member Services via membership@marinerescuensw.com.au
4. MRNSW Unit should assess how much contact other members had with the person who tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was infectious in the workplace. This assessment should include the nature of contact, length of time of contact, and whether any PPE was being utilised at the time of contact, for example masks.
5. Your assessment of workplace risk, guided by the NSW Health contact risk assessment matrix, may indicate there are members who have had high risk exposures or moderate risk exposures. For further information in assessing contact risk visit, <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Factsheets/people-exposed-to-covid.pdf>
6. Advise members of the situation in your workplace. Consult with members about the identification and management of any remaining health and safety risks.

Levels of assessed risk and requirements of MRNSW members

After being exposed to someone with COVID-19 you are at risk of getting it for 14 days. Most people who develop COVID-19 will get it in the first 7 days and so this is when you are at highest risk. However, approximately 25% of cases will develop COVID-19 between day 7 and 14, so you are at risk for up to 14 days.

Your risk of getting COVID-19 will be based on the type of contact you had with a person who has COVID-19. When thinking about your testing and isolation requirements, think about your own circumstances, including the risk you could be to vulnerable people you live or work with. All people exposed to someone with COVID-19 should watch carefully for symptoms. If symptoms occur, have a PCR (nose and throat) test immediately and isolate until you receive a negative result.

The following, based on advice from NSW Health, can help to identify who is at greatest risk of COVID-19, and what to do if you are told you are a contact of someone with COVID-19.

1. Member lives with someone who has COVID-19 (household contact) – **HIGH**

- You must follow the Self-Isolation requirements and self-isolate for 7 days from the last time you in contact with the COVID positive person. Get a PCR or RAT test as soon as possible. Follow the advice and isolation requirements of NSW Health.
 - You can return to MRNSW duties after 7 days providing you are free of symptoms.
2. Member spent a long time with someone who has COVID-19 or I interacted closely with someone who has COVID-19 and we were not wearing masks (e.g. we spent an extended period of time in a radio room or on board a vessel) – **HIGH**
 - Self-isolation for 7 days from the last time you were in contact with the person with COVID-19 is the most effective way of protecting others. You should have a PCR or RAT test as soon as possible.
 - You can return to MRNSW duties after 7 days providing you are free of symptoms.
 3. Member spent some time in the workplace with a member who has COVID-19 eg, spent time at a Unit meeting – **MODERATE**
 - If you do not have symptoms, it is recommended that you have a rapid antigen test as soon as possible. A second rapid antigen test around Day 6 after exposure can also help to identify early infection. If you have a positive rapid antigen test or symptoms, continue to isolate until you receive a negative result.
 - Only attend MRNSW duties if free of symptoms.
 4. Member had brief or distanced contact with a member in the workplace with COVID-19 e.g. watch changeover, engagement in outdoor setting, or member received a case alert in the Service NSW App - **LOW**
 - Monitor for symptoms. If symptoms occur, get a PCR or RAT test immediately and self-isolate until you receive a negative result.
 - Only attend MRNSW duties if free of symptoms.

For further information: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Factsheets/people-exposed-to-covid.pdf>

How will NSW Health be involved?

NSW Health will not be involved in most instances where there is a positive worker in the workplace. NSW Health may become involved if there are multiple cases associated with a business or workplace, or in other specific circumstances. Based on further assessment, NSW Health may recommend further actions to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.

MRNSW responsibilities for informing members

Units should advise members of the general situation, noting that the privacy and confidentiality of the member who tested positive for COVID-19 must always be maintained. Information provided should include:

- Symptoms of COVID-19 that members should monitor themselves for
- Direct to NSW Health information, www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx
- Reminders to members to not enter the Unit or attend to duty if they are unwell

- Advice on physical distancing and personal hygiene measures (e.g. hand hygiene and cough etiquette)
- Reminder members of MRNSW Operating Risk Protocol Level, www.marinerescuensw.com.au/members/covid-19-operations-in-2021/covid-19-risk-management-protocols/

Closing down the MRNSW premises may or may not be required

General government advice is businesses do not necessarily have to close if a worker has tested positive to COVID-19. The decision to close a business depends on:

- Ongoing transmission. Evidence of ongoing spread of infection (transmission) from person to person in the workplace might mean the business has to close temporarily to stop transmission between workers.
- Cleaning requirements. Premises must be appropriately cleaned following attendance of a confirmed case. This can be done overnight so as not to disrupt normal business hours. If premises are told during business hours they may need to close to undertake cleaning.

All areas used by any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should be cleaned and disinfected.

For hard surfaces, either:

- use detergent and water for cleaning followed by disinfectant solution (2-step clean)
- use a combined detergent and disinfectant solution (2-in-1 clean).
- Specialist cleaning is not required.

Routine cleaning and disinfection in the workplace should be undertaken as part of normal business.

When members are returning to duty

Members who have tested positive for COVID-19 can only return to duty after they are medically cleared. This means they have completed the required isolation period, are no longer infectious and followed any other NSW Health requirement.

Members who are contacts and remain negative can return to work once they have completed any required testing and isolation period.

NSW Health resources provide further information:

www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/self-isolation-rules

Note: The advice contained in this guidance note has been sourced directly from NSW Government COVID – 19 health advice.

If you have any questions or require more information email:

membership@marinerescuensw.com.au