ETH*zürich*

Guidelines

COVID-19: Communication of illness, handling close contacts and supporting contact tracing – for ETH staff

1. Situation

In the current phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, supervisors are facing the issue of how to respond and share information if one of their team members tests positive for the coronavirus. When responding, supervisors must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect the health of all team members, that they support the authorities in containing the pandemic (contact tracing), and that privacy rights and data protection are respected for the person in question. These guidelines will outline how to proceed in such cases. The following definitions are used:

Close contact
Close contacts are defined as situations in which people have spent more than 15 minutes together with less than 1.5 metres of distance between them. The time frame to be considered is maximally 5 days before symptoms arise or before a confirmed positive test. The close contacts in this time frame are relevant as well as the last possible contact.

Primary contact
Person has had contact with another infected person.

Secondary contact
Person has had close contact with someone who was in contact with an infected person. For cases of secondary contact, it is only necessary to go into self-isolation, if the primary contact shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. The order to quarantine or to do a test can only be issued by the cantonal Contact Tracing.

COVID-19 symptoms
In the event of fever, coughing, muscle aches, throat aches, breathing difficulties, sudden loss of sense of taste and/or smell: remain at home. Contact your general practitioner or the Ärztefon Zurich (0800 33 66 55) to take a coronavirus test as soon as possible.

2. Communication of COVID-19 cases: employee–supervisor

Supervisors should communicate transparently and proactively within their teams regarding COVID-19 cases in order to create trust and remove uncertainty and fear as far as possible. All communication should be done according to the need-to-know principle: information should be shared as sparingly as possible in compliance with privacy obligations. The SSHE occupational medicine team and/or HR can be consulted where necessary.

Supervisors are to share information on whether a person has been ordered to work from home or is subject to quarantine (a) due to symptoms of illness, (b) close contact with a person infected with

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COVID-19 or (c) due to a confirmed COVID-19 case, and whether the person in question is still working or on sick leave. If the person is on sick leave, a deputy must be named and included in the person's out-of- office message.

Anyone with symptoms of illness must remain at home and inform their supervisor. Anyone remaining at home by order of a doctor's certificate must inform their supervisor. Anyone in quarantine ordered by the authorities or tested positive for COVID-19 must inform their supervisor immediately.

Anyone who finds themselves in any of the situations below should inform their supervisor and observe the appropriate measures:

A) Person exhibits general symptoms of illness (no known close contacts).

In case of symptoms (see "COVID-19 symptoms" above), the person must stay at home until 24 hours after symptoms have ceased. If the individual is able to work, they should do so from home. In accordance with Federal Office of Public Health (BAG) recommendations, the individual should be tested for coronavirus, even if symptoms are mild. The Executive Board recommends that members of ETH be tested for coronavirus in this case. To do so, the individual can contact their general practitioner or the Ärztefon Zurich (0800 33 66 55). Alternatively, the "**coronavirus check**" can be conducted. If the test confirms a COVID-19 infection, proceed according to situation C below.

B) Person known to have had close contact (cf. "Close contact" above) with someone infected with COVID-19.

Immediately start working from home for 10 days, even if you test negative. Further instructions (quarantine) may be made by the cantonal doctor. Working from home (10 days) for team colleagues who have had close contact (secondary contact) with this person is required, if this person exhibits symptoms or if a COVID-19 infection is confirmed. After returning to the workplace, primary and secondary contacts wear a mask for 4 days during personal contacts at ETH (strong recommendation).

C) SwissCovid App reports close contact with an infected person.

If you get a message by the SwissCovid app, you might have been infected with Covid-19. Protect your personal environment by staying home and avoiding personal contacts. Persons who receive such a message can call the SwissCovid Infoline (+41 58 463 00 00, every day from 6am to 11pm) to determine the further steps and to discuss the possibility of a free test. Your privacy is guaranteed at all times. If someone who receives a message already has symptoms, they should stay at home, avoid personal contacts and call their family doctor or another healthcare institution. In this case, this person counts as primary contact.

You can support contact tracing by using the SwissCovid app. ETH recommends all its members to download and use it. For further information, please visit the **BAG-website**.

D) Person with a confirmed COVID-19 infection

In the event of confirmed COVID-19 illness, the cantonal doctor orders 10 days of isolation.

If symptoms develop, the individual must call their general practitioner or the Ärztefon Zurich (0800 33 66 55) if no other course of action has been mandated by the cantonal doctor.

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Communicating positive COVID-19 tests (D)

	Steps	Comment
1	Employee informs their supervisor and goes into isolation	(Cantonal) doctor's procedure
2	Supervisor informs their team, in consultation with the employee in question	Email template
3	Supervisor informs **SSHE occupational medicine team** and the relevant HR business partner	Recipients: employees from SSHE occupational medicine team, who will treat the case confidentially
4	SSHE occupational medicine team/HR advise the supervisor and inform the crisis task force	In accordance with privacy and data protection obligations
5	Crisis task force can issue instructions if necessary	In accordance with ETH regulations re: COVID-19

Communicating suspected COVID-19 cases (B)

	Steps	Comment
1	Employee informs their supervisor, goes home and contacts GP/Ärztefon (0800 33 66 55) for a test	
2	Supervisor informs their team as precautionary step, in consultation with the employee in question	Email template
3	As a precautionary step, supervisor informs **SSHE occupational medicine team** and the relevant HR business partner and instructs team members who may have had close contact with the potentially ill employee to work from home effective immediately	Recipients of this message include employees from SSHE occupational medicine team, who will treat the case confidentially
4a	Employee tests positive → Proceed according to table C above	
4b	Employee tests negative → Proceed according to doctor's instructions; employee informs supervisor of the result	10 days of working from home and 4 days of mask-wearing when having personal contacts after returning to ETH (strong recommendation)
5	Supervisor informs **SSHE occupational medicine team** and the relevant HR business partner and tells their team that they no longer need to work from home	

In case the person suspecting to be infected / having been tested positively is a lecturer with an ongoing lecture or with imminent exams, they have to inform the Academic Services via **infolehre@ethz.ch** immediately.

Anyone who has symptoms should stay at home until they have been without symptoms for 24 hours.

A person with a confirmed Covid-19-infection can return to the workplace, as instructed by the contact tracers, after ten days of isolation and after having been symptom-free for 48 hours.

You can find all relevant information on testing and its cost in the corresponding BAG-**factsheet**.

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3. Supporting contact tracing efforts: procedure

As a general rule, the authorities do not conduct any contact tracing themselves if an organisation (like ETH Zurich) has safety protocols in place for avoiding close contacts without protective masks. However, in some cases (e.g. non-compliance with the safety protocols, a cluster of cases, general uncertainty), the authorities might contact ETH for more detailed information about possible close contacts. Should that occur, cantonal medical authorities/contact tracers can demand that organisational units at ETH (groups, departments, offices, platforms, etc.) turn over on-site presence lists in order to trace possible contacts – potentially also on the weekend. Each organisational unit must designate one person (and one deputy) in charge of turning over the lists for their particular area. The procedure is outlined in the table below:

Procedure for cooperating with cantonal contact tracers (CT)

	Steps	Comment
1	From Monday through Sunday, the ETH Emergency Desk is the first point of contact	
2	Emergency Desk contacts designated SSHE employees	These employees are members of the SSHE occupational medicine team or members of the corona team and will treat all incoming messages as confidential
3	SSHE contacts the CT or cantonal doctor's office in order to determine what information is needed. Afterwards, SSHE contacts the designated employee from the organisational unit in question and requests that the relevant list(s) are turned over for the period in question	
4	The unit in question forwards the relevant list(s) to SSHE as soon as possible. SSHE will issue the list(s) to the CT	SSHE will delete the lists immediately after they are issued.
5	SSHE informs the crisis task force, which can issue further instructions if needed	In accordance with ETH regulations re: COVID-19
6	Further steps in accordance with CT's instructions. Lists are deleted after 14 days	Possibly taking the two tables above into account

Cantonal doctor regulations require that these lists contain the following information:
- Last name, first name
- Home address
- Personal phone number

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