**Appendix C: Working with COVID-19 exposures in public or crowded locations**

**Definition:**

When a case visited a location or setting with many, potentially unidentifiable, people during their infectious period and there is a significant risk of exposure and/or a clustering event.

**Purpose:**

Although the close contact definition of an exposure totaling 15 minutes within 6 feet of a confirmed case is a useful guideline, it is often insufficient in locations that are densely packed, have poor airflow, or have lots of social mixing making determining close contacts difficult. It is also insufficient in locations with prolonged periods of exposure, such as in workplaces, where there may not have been close contact but space and air are shared for hours and days. In these settings, it is important to inform everyone of their potential exposure to COVID-19 and get as many individuals referred for testing, treatment, and vaccination as possible.

Interacting with a point of contact at the location is often the easiest way to do this as they may have patron logs, employee rosters, or other ways of informing everyone who may have been present at the time of the exposure.

These calls serve to inform the location and everyone present of the exposure, make linkages to testing, treatment, and vaccination resources, and serve as a starting point for outbreak investigation.

**Notification and Investigation:**

Before placing these calls there are some general best practices to make the calls easier and more effective:

* Identify yourself as working with the local public health department and be clear with what information you are calling to provide and ask about.
* Try to reach the correct point of contact for the location, many businesses and organizations will have dedicated COVID teams or nurses that will be best place to answer your questions.
* Be sensitive of potentially identifying health information if you are not authorized to release that information.
* Prepare all of your questions and request ahead of time.

Although these calls will be quite variable depending on the exact type of exposure and setting, there are some general steps that will apply to all of these calls:

1. Inform: A primary goal following an exposure at a public location should be to ensure that the location, and all people potentially affected, are notified of their exposure.

2. Investigate: Collecting some basic information, as well as sector specific information or information of basic clusters, is important to ensure that the risk of the exposure is fully assessed, cluster investigation begins if it is needed, and the locations is prepared with all necessary resources to respond to the exposure. Additionally, collection of a roster or guest list should always be seen as a goal of these calls, to facilitate widespread notification.

3. Plan: Locations should have a plan for COVID exposures in place. If they already have one, this is an opportunity to review that plan and ensure that they are able to carry out the steps quickly. If the location does not have a plan to respond to the COVID exposure, this call can be a way to walk them through the basic steps.

4. Respond: The location should be prepared to notify everyone potentially exposed and link them with local testing, treatment, and vaccination resources (whether by doing it themselves as in Appendix C1 or by passing the necessary information to the local health department).

Beyond the basic information, each type of location or organization will have specific questions that may be helpful to ask in assessing the risk of the exposure, collecting contacts, and investigating clusters. Below, guiding questions for common types of locations are given:

**Workplaces (any):**

1. Have you already been informed of this particular exposure?
2. How has everyone been feeling recently? Has anyone reported any symptoms or been out sick?
3. When was the last time you had a COVID-19 exposure in this location?
4. How many people work here?
5. What spaces are there for congregating? (ex. Lunch room, kitchen area, break room, locker room, etc.)
6. Do people carpool or socialize outside of work?
7. What are the typical interactions between employees?
8. Are there any temp agents?
9. Are there any interactions with the public? (ex. Clients, guests, patrons who come in to the location for business)
10. What steps are taken after you learn of a COVID-19 exposure?
11. What is the testing and vaccination policy in this workplace?
12. Have you conducted contact tracing following this/these exposure(s)?
13. Have you notified the entire workplace of the potential exposure?
    1. If the location has public interactions, have you notified the public to get tested through social media or the company website?
14. Is the local health department aware of this exposure?
15. Do you have any questions about COVID-19 exposure/outbreak response or safe practices?

**Daycare/childcare/youth recreational activities:**

1. Have you already been informed of this particular exposure?
2. How has everyone been feeling recently? Has anyone reported any symptoms or been out sick?
3. When was the last time you had a COVID-19 exposure in this location?
4. How many people students are there? How many staff members?
5. What are the interactions like between students and staff?
   1. How many classrooms are there?
   2. Do classrooms ever interact?
   3. Are any COVID-19 precautions in place?
6. What spaces are there for congregation? (ex. Cafeteria, gym, recreational areas, etc.)
7. Does the student/staff member carpool, take a bus, or other form of organized transportation?
8. Does the student/staff member participate in after-school activities?
   1. With what frequency?
   2. Where does the activity take place?
9. Does the student/staff member participate in a sports activity?
   1. If so, what sport?
   2. How many times does the team play in games/practice?
   3. Where does the game/practice take place?
      1. If a game, who were they playing?
   4. Are there congregating areas at this location? (ex. Bench, locker room, water breaks)
   5. Does carpooling/organized transportation occur on the team?
   6. Have there been any team social events recently?
10. What COVID-19 precautions are in place?
11. What steps are taken after you learn of a COVID-19 exposure?
12. What is the testing and vaccination policy in this workplace?
13. Have you conducted contact tracing following this/these exposure(s)?
14. Have you notified the entire workplace of the potential exposure?
15. Is the local health department aware of this exposure?
16. Do you have any questions about COVID-19 exposure/outbreak response or safe practices?

**Places of worship:**

1. Was the location already aware of the exposure?
2. Did the exposure occur at a service, small group event, or other community event?
3. How many people attended the religious service(s)?
4. Was there a choir or other singing during the event?
5. Does the location keep a list of congregants or attendees for their services?
6. How many close contacts were collected?
7. What actions have already been taken by the Place of Worship?
   1. Are testing options available?
8. How many staff/congregants are vaccinated?
   1. If not 100%, is the POC interested in receiving information on engaging in discussions around vaccination, local vaccination programs, or other resources (in English or other languages?)
9. Has the health department already been informed?
   1. If not, recommend that they call their health department to inform them of the exposure
10. Provide next steps on conjunction with local public health regulations.

**Social gatherings/events:**

1. Are you speaking with the host of the party/gathering?
   1. If not, what is their full name and phone number?
2. Is the host already aware of the exposure?
3. How many people attended the party or gathering?
4. Where was it located? Was it inside, outside, both?
5. Was everyone wearing a mask?
6. Were people social distancing?
7. Was food or drink served at the gathering?
8. How many cases are they aware of right now among guests?
9. Collect names and phone numbers of all guests.
10. Have you held or attended any other gatherings in the last 2 weeks?
11. Did you notify all guests? Do you have a way to do this?
12. If they have not yet notified guests, please advise them to do so and to recommend testing regardless of the presence of symptoms.
    1. Provide resources to reference – state website and / or hotline, testing sites, vaccination sites
13. Who is the best contact person for this gathering and what's their direct number if we have additional questions?

**Documentation:**

Documentation of these calls is critical to allow for analysis of trends in exposures, to help detect clusters, and to prepare for future calls that may be needed if the setting has a subsequent exposure. The information that is useful to document will change greatly depending on the sector of the location that had the exposure. If the contact tracing data system is not able to record all of the data from these calls, options such as SharePoint Forms or Google Forms can be created to record and organize these calls.