

**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**COVID-19: Staff Protocols**  
**Last Updated: 10/2/2023**

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RIDOC determines exposure, isolation and testing decisions based on RIDOH and CDC guidelines and recommendations. RIDOC is unique as it is not only a correctional facility but is also considered a congregate living setting, thus there are multiple factors that contribute to this decision making. RIDOC routinely consults with the RIDOH to determine the best course of action based upon these factors and the individual circumstances surrounding an exposure. Changes to these protocols may be made in response to case numbers and crisis staffing.

***In accordance with the most recent CDC recommendations published on 9/12/2023, RIDOC Staff are encouraged to receive an updated (2023-2024) COVID-19 vaccine.***

***Masking is not mandatory; however, staff are encouraged to wear masks indoors, especially when unable to maintain social distancing.***

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**TESTING**

Regular surveillance testing may occur at specific intervals as determined by the Medical Program Director. Those who test positive for COVID-19 should not undergo asymptomatic PCR testing until 90 days after their isolation period has ended.

- ❖ Staff should not report to work if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. All symptomatic individuals should stay home and test. Testing can be done in the community or arranged at the Women's Facility (WF). [Click to find Community-based testing sites \(HHS.gov\)](#)
  - ❖ Staff who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms should coordinate with their supervisor and arrange for testing at the Women's Facility. If staff are unable to be immediately relieved from duty, the staff members should wear a mask and maintain social distancing.
  - ❖ Testing at the WF must be arranged with the WF Operations Desk at 462-2300. The WF testing procedure must be followed, **no walk-ins allowed**.
  - ❖ If testing is positive, individuals should follow the isolation guidelines below.
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**POST EXPOSURE PROTOCOL**

Quarantine after exposure to COVID-19 is not needed; however, staff who are exposed should test at least 5 days after exposure (Day 6) or sooner if they develop symptoms. The exposed staff may arrange to get tested at the WF. The exposed staff should continue to wear a mask until 10 days after exposure.

**Staff with a positive test must continue to follow RIDOC-specific Isolation Protocols as outlined below.**

## ISOLATION PROTOCOLS

**NO ONE shall enter any RIDOC facility who is COVID-19 positive or has COVID-19 like symptoms.**

Isolation protocols do not change based on vaccination status; however, isolation may be prolonged if symptoms persist or if the individual is immunocompromised.

- ❖ ***An at-home rapid test is NOT sufficient proof of a positive COVID-19 test.***
- ❖ Upon receipt of a positive COVID-19 test, staff must notify their supervisor and send a copy of their positive COVID-19 test results (if tested in the community) to [doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov](mailto:doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov). Results of testing performed at the WF will be communicated by the facility's designated correctional staff, as necessary.
- ❖ **Non-uniformed staff** must isolate, *using their own sick time*, for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date they initially tested positive. Non-uniformed staff can end isolation and return to work on day 6 if ALL the conditions below are met:
  - Symptoms are improving; and
  - Individual is fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication e.g., aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil).
  - Non-uniform staff MUST wear a mask until day 10.
  - Return to work testing is not required.
- ❖ **Uniformed staff** must isolate, *using their own sick time*, for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date they initially tested positive.
  - On day 5 and day 7, uniformed staff must be tested at the WF.
  - On day 6, when required and with a negative test on day 5, uniformed staff may return to work. Uniform staff MUST wear a mask until day 10.
  - If both tests on day 5 and day 7 are negative and the individual has no symptoms and is fever-free without fever-reducing medication, masking is no longer mandatory.
  - If any of the above tests shall be positive, the individual must not return to work and should isolate for the full 10 days from the start of symptoms or from the date they initially tested positive. Return to work is day 11 and further testing is not required.
- ❖ Individuals with underlying health conditions, or those that are immunocompromised, should discuss length of isolation and time to return to work with their PCP to ensure they are no longer contagious or at risk for serious health complications related to the COVID-19 virus.

These recommendations have been developed based on the current CDC Guidance in Correctional Facilities and the CDC Contingency Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages, with some modifications to reflect local context/resources.

**All staff will have access to adequate PPE.**