

**March 14th, 2022**

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**COVID-19 Endemic Protocol – Field**

Operational Guidelines for transition through the endemic from the Department’s COVID-19 Response Team will be updated frequently to incorporate the latest scientific, medical, and governmental recommendations. Please ensure you are using the most current document.

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### Definitions

- a. **Fully Vaccinated:** 2 weeks have passed since the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series OR 2 weeks have passed since a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- b. **Immunocompromised:** Having an impaired immune system as diagnosed by a medical provider.
- c. **Lamp test:** LAMP is similar to the PCR lab tests, also known as Lucira. It test amplifies the SARS-CoV-2 virus's genetic material while the test is running. Lucira's accuracy is comparable to one of the highest sensitivity lab PCR tests.

## Section 1 – Staff

### i. Mask Requirement

Effective March 14, 2022, facial coverings will no longer be required for employees, contractors, and visitors to State offices and buildings regardless of vaccination status unless required by local municipal mask mandates while on duty.

Individuals who wish to wear a mask may continue to do so.

### ii. Immunocompromised Staff

1. If any staff feel they are immunocompromised, it is their responsibility to pursue accommodations through human resources.

2. If you believe you are disabled in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and can still perform the essential functions of your position, with or without a reasonable accommodation, you may request an accommodation in accordance with State of Vermont Policy 3.2 – Reasonable Accommodation: [Number 3.2 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#)

iv. COVID-19 Antigen Testing-Staff

1. Each field site shall dedicate specific DM or CPS to secure the antigen test kits in their offices with access limited to those dedicated staff.
2. Antigen tests are available to any DOC or contract staff working out of a field site at the approval of the CPS or DM who become symptomatic when reporting to the work or who report symptoms while at work.
3. DMs or CPS may approve use of an antigen test outside the above parameters but only for symptomatic staff.
4. Staff will conduct the test in an isolated area avoiding close contact with others. (Preferably in their vehicle)
5. Staff will show the results to the DM or CPS.
6. For any initial positive COVID 19 result, staff will complete the [VDH Report form](#) and return to the DM or CPS
7. No PCR test is required if an initial antigen shows a positive result.
8. The DM or CPS will immediately then forward the VDH form to the COVID team alias. [AHS.DOCCOVIDResponseTeam@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.DOCCOVIDResponseTeam@vermont.gov).
9. Any negative antigen result does not require a VDH Report Form and is NOT required to be sent to the COVID team alias.
10. If staff receive a positive result from an at home antigen test the results must be reported to their DM or CPS and reported on the VDH web site. [Vermont COVID-19 Self-Test Result Reporting Form \(alchemer.com\)](#)
11. Staff who are symptomatic, but test negative on Antigen, are still excluded from work until cleared by a medical provider or receives a negative PCR test which follows the return-to-work protocols outlined below.

12. Unattested staff shall continue to follow State of Vermont guidance for testing.

## Section 2 – Transports

1. Any offender being transported by field staff must wear a surgical mask.
2. Staff conducting transports will wear masks.
3. When transporting a COVID-19 or suspected infected offender will follow the transport process outlined in the facility protocol.

## Section 4 - Return to Work Following a COVID-19 Positive

In order to be cleared to return to work, staff will need to follow the criteria below:

The Vermont Department of Corrections is following the guidelines issued by the CDC which is supported by the Vermont Department of Health.

***These recommendations are in accordance with the CDC Return to Work Guideline updates as of 1/9/2022***

### **COVID Positive Staff ([Vermont's Guidance: What to do if you test positive](#))**

- Positive staff can return to work after day 5 if:
  - i. The person has two negative antigen tests performed at least 24 hours apart beginning no earlier than day 4
  - ii. If still antigen positive on day 9, STOP testing and use prior return to work protocols
    1. Return on day 11 if symptoms improved and no fever for 24 hours
  - iii. AND The person never had symptoms or symptoms have improved and they feel better
  - iv. AND they have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers
  - v. AND they can wear a mask around others through day 10.
  - vi. Subsequent positive antigen testing do not need to be submitted to the alias.
  - vii. Negative antigen test results DO NOT need to be submitted to the alias,

- **Unattested staff who are within their 90 day of a positive collection and meet the close contact criteria do not need to be excluded from work so long as they are asymptomatic.**

**Staff who are immunocompromised or have symptoms that persist for longer than 10 days should seek the advice of a health care provider prior to returning to work.**

**Staff experiencing symptoms but not confirmed COVID 19 positive**

Symptomatic Staff may return to work if they fall under either of the 2 categories listed below:

- Staff who are cleared by a medical provider may return to work as directed
- Staff who have received a negative COVID 19 PCR test may return to work