

Texas Department of Public Safety Internal Incident Coordination Center

Operational Medicine Unit (OMU) Bulletin #20200518.00

This Bulletin addresses immediate and important Life Safety and health concerns for DPS employees, contractors, visitors, and customers.

As DPS prepares for additional employees returning to work, opening business for additional customers, and continuing health and safety practices, internal trends show the need for reminders and confirmation of existing screening, recording, reporting and personal protective equipment practices and processes.

These practices and processes have established two (2) dominant trends over the last 10 + weeks:

1. Following the practices and processes have proven to save lives, diminish the spread of illness, lessen the closure of offices and operations.
2. Unfortunately, it has also proven that "not" following these practices and processes have had severe and costly consequences to personnel, teams, operations, and business closures.

Follow the established practices, processes, and lessons learned mentioned below, along with safe practices away from work, we can change the course and outcome of COVID-19 at the Agency, at home and with our families.

These practices are based on recommendations from CDC Critical Infrastructure Workers guidelines, FEMA and OSHA guidelines, and other best practices and lessons learned.

There are five (5) essential practices and processes to follow:

1. Pre-Screening at work – screening checkpoints/daily checks
2. Wear PPE at work - especially face masks
3. Social distancing - 6 feet is required at work
4. Hand washing/sanitizing – regularly at work
5. Disinfecting the work place – your personal work space included

Stopping the spread of COVID-19 is imperative upon everyone following the established practices and processes in their entirety.

Recording and reporting the incidents as established in the practices and processes is not mandatory.

Current practices and processes cannot be adjusted, removed, replaced, or otherwise changed without consultation of the Operational Medicine Unit (OMU).

The following provides additional information on the five (5) essential practices and processes, figures on symptoms, DPS exposures, and masks importance.

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The five (5) essential practices and processes:

1. Pre-Screening before coming to work and screening checkpoint that involves temperature taking and symptom/exposure questions
 - a. Don't come to work sick.
 - b. Screening prior to entering the work place
 - c. Monitoring throughout the shift for symptoms of COVID-19
2. PPE–Face Mask at work
 - a. N-95 masks should be worn in high-risk environments as defined by leadership. All other mask should be at least 2-ply and/or surgical.
 - b. DPS follows CDC guidance by having masks in place to prevent an exposure.
 - c. Masks are to be worn in common work areas, break rooms, bathrooms, while traveling in vehicles with co-workers.
 - d. Masks should also be worn by commissioned employees during transport of arrestees, vehicle searches, interviews in close proximity of suspects or witnesses, etc.
 - e. Masks can be removed if working in a single office where others are not present.
3. Social Distancing at work
 - a. Remain 6 feet away from co-workers and customers.
 - b. Minimize the number of employees in the same location for meetings, work spaces, etc.
4. Hand washing/sanitizing
 - a. Wash hands regularly
 - b. Use hand sanitizer following the use of copy machines, touching door handles, handling packages, etc.
5. Disinfecting work areas daily
 - a. Disinfect common work areas such as copy machines, break rooms bathrooms, door handles
 - b. Shared work spaces should be cleared at the beginning and end of each shift
 - c. Wipe down keyboards, phones, counter tops, etc.

Symptoms

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There is a common misconception that a fever and/or cough are the key indicators for COVID-19. Based on current trends CDC has expanded the list of common symptoms of COVID-19 as listed below. Figure 1.

Symptom	#	%	DPS Offices & Personnel Affected Due to Exposure	
Asymptomatic	4	13%		
Cough (Productive & Dry)	20	65%		
Sore Throat	3	10%		
Headache	3	10%		
Chest (Pain/Congestion/Heavy)	12	39%		
Fever	16	52%		
Chills	5	16%		
Nasal Congestion	8	26%		
Body Aches	6	19%		
Loss of smell/taste	4	13%		
Diarrhea	6	19%		
Fatigue	10	32%		
"Allergy-like"	5	16%		
"Cold or Flu-like"	4	13%		
			DPS Employees Assessed by the OMU	1391
			DPS Employees Impacted Associated to Exposure:	1127 = 81%
			Total DPS Employees Affected Department Wide:	1391 = 14%
			Total DPS Office Closures:	43
			DPS Employees Impacted Associated to Office Closures:	815 = 59%
			DPS Employees Tested Positive for COVID-19	31

Figure 1: Symptoms and DPS cases relationship

Figure 2: All employees assessed by OMU as of 05/01/2020

Figure 1 provides statistics the OMU has captured showing the variety of symptoms presented with the 31 current positive COVID-19 cases within DPS.

The OMU has assessed approximately 1,391 DPS employees, which is approximately 14% of the agency. Of those assessed, approximately 81% have had to be quarantined for some period of time. Of those, approximately 59% were quarantined due to an office closure. However, with the addition of PPE and screening, we will continue to be able to prevent the closure of offices and quarantine of personnel due to possible COVID-19 exposures. As of May 18, 2020 DPS has had 31 employees test positive for COVID-19. Figure 2.

In order to be successful in limiting the spread of COVID-19, we need your help in participating in the practices and processes established at DPS. Actively use the five (5) essential practices and processes. Including recording and reporting incidents when they occur, and ask questions if you are not sure.

Together we can work to minimize the spread, operational impact, and more importantly, the impact to the health and safety of our fellow employees and their families.

Respectfully,

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