



# Parish Action Plan for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Infection, and Travel-Related Risk

## Recommended Guidance

### Background

This guidance is based on CDC and New Hampshire guidelines. Details can be found here:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>
- <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-universal.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/self-isolation-covid.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/travel-guidance.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/documents/covid-19-update38.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/documents/covid-19-update37.pdf>
- <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/documents/covid-19-update36.pdf>

### Scope

This guidance applies whenever anyone (priest, staff member, volunteer, vendor, visitor, parishioner, etc.) is infected or potentially infected with COVID-19 **and** that person has been in a parish facility starting 7 days prior to their test date or the date symptoms first appeared.

This guidance also includes recommended actions when a staff member, priest, or volunteer travel outside of New Hampshire.

### Definitions

**Infected Person:** Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms) within the last 14 days.

**Potentially Infected Person/Suspected COVID-19:** Anyone who has new unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 (see symptoms below).

**Symptoms:** Symptoms of COVID-19 include any of the following:

1. Fever (a documented temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or are feeling feverish, including chills, and shaking;
2. Respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
3. General body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
4. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea;
5. Changes in sense of taste or smell

**Close Contact:** People who have been within 6 feet for 10 minutes or longer of another person with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms (with or without masks). The 10 minutes of contact can be at one time or cumulative over the course of a day. Close contact does not include brief contact with another person.



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#### Record Keeping

Keep records of the response steps taken based on the protocols below. This includes employee/volunteer actions, records of reports to public health officials, communications, and facility cleaning and disinfecting. It is a good practice to maintain a COVID-19 folder, whether electronically or hard copy, and also keep copies of the regular steps the Parish is taking to reduce the risk of COVID-19. For example, if this information is posted to the Parish website, print, or save a copy of the web page(s), and keep a copy each time the information changes.

#### Protocols

##### 1. **Confirmed COVID-19 – Non-Staff Member and Non-Volunteer (e.g., parishioner)**

- a. If the individual currently is at a parish location, direct the individual to put on a mask and leave immediately. If the individual is not able to leave immediately, have the person wait in an isolated area and leave as soon as possible.
- b. Contact the diocesan designated medical professional at 603-663-0137 for assistance if needed.
- c. Inform those who could have been in close contact with the infected individual within the last 14 days from date of symptoms onset or, if asymptomatic, from test date. If the individual with COVID-19 had attended Mass, a parish event, or a parish meeting, a broader communication may be appropriate. See Sample Communications section below. Due to privacy concerns, do not release the person's name.
- d. Outside organization (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Boy Scouts) that are utilizing a parish facility should handle their own communication. Some outside groups are closely affiliated with the parish (e.g., Knights of Columbus) and the event could have broad participation among parishioners. In this case, consider a parish-wide communication as shown in the Sample Communications section below.

If a staff member or parish volunteer was in the same area as this group, you should let them know.

- e. Staff members (including priests) and volunteers who have been in close contact with the infected person should contact a healthcare provider, get tested, and quarantine for 14 days from the last contact date. See Close Contact section below for more details and also see Exceptions below.
- f. Disinfect all facility areas where the individual who tested positive could have been (e.g., office space, conference rooms, sacristy, altar area, sanctuary, etc.). See Cleaning and Disinfection section below.
- g. Keep a record of the steps taken to provide notice and to clean and disinfect the facilities.



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#### Protocols (continued)

#### 2. **Confirmed COVID-19 – Staff Members and Volunteers**

- a. If the individual currently is at a parish location, direct the individual to put on a mask and leave immediately. If the individual is not able to leave immediately, have the person wait in an isolated area and leave as soon as possible.
- b. Contact the diocesan designated medical professional at 603-663-0137 for assistance if needed.
- c. The staff member or volunteer should self-isolate until 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or, if no symptoms, since the test date, and they have no fever for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication, and other symptoms are improving. Depending on their workload and availability, DPHS may manage this process and provide a letter (via email) when the individual is cleared to end isolation.
- d. Inform those who could have been in close contact with the infected individual within the last 14 days from date of symptoms onset or, if asymptomatic, from test date. Due to privacy concerns, do not release the person's name. If the infected person has been in areas with parishioners or visitors, then consider a broader communication - see Sample Communications section below.
- e. Staff members (including priests) and volunteers who have been in close contact with the infected person should quarantine for 14 days from the last contact date (see Close Contact section below for more details) and get tested. See Exceptions below. If the staff member or volunteer tests positive or develops symptoms, they should self-isolate as shown above. Depending on their workload, the DPHS may manage contact tracing, determine those who have been in close contact with the infected individual, manage the quarantine process, and provide a letter (via email) when the quarantine can end.
- f. Disinfect all facility areas where the staff member or volunteer who tested positive was working (e.g., office space, conference rooms, sacristy, altar area, sanctuary, etc.). See Cleaning and Disinfection section below.
- g. Allow the staff member or volunteer to return to a parish facility after they complete their self-isolation or self-quarantine. The NH Department of Public Health Services (DPHS) may provide a letter clearing them to return to work.
- h. Keep a record of the steps taken to provide notice and to clean and disinfect the facilities.



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#### Protocols (continued)

#### 3. Suspected COVID-19 (unexplained symptoms of COVID-19) – Staff Members and Volunteers

- a. If the individual currently is at a parish location, direct the individual to put on a mask and leave immediately. If the individual is not able to leave immediately, have the person wait in an isolated area and leave as soon as possible.
- b. Contact the diocesan designated medical professional at 603-663-0137 for assistance if needed.
- c. The individual should go home, contact a healthcare provider, and get tested for COVID-19, even if that person is fully vaccinated or was previously infected. The individual also should self-isolate until 10 days have passed since symptoms first appears, no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, and other symptoms are improving. If the individual is tested and the result is negative, the person should self-isolate until there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and other symptoms are improving. If the individual tests positive, then follow the Confirmed COVID-19 Protocol above. Even if the individual meets one of the exceptions shown below, then they should still self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider for further instructions.
- d. Inform those who could have been in close contact with the potentially infected individual within 14 days from date of symptoms onset. Due to privacy concerns, do not release the potentially infected person's name. If it is believed they were in close contact with the potentially infected person or have COVID-19 symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact a healthcare provider to be tested.
- e. Staff members (including priests) and volunteers who have been in close contact with this person should quarantine for 14 days from the last contact date. See Exceptions below. See Close Contact section below for more details. If they subsequently develop symptoms, they should contact a healthcare provider and get tested.

If the person with suspected COVID-19 subsequently tests negative or it is determined by a healthcare professional that symptoms are not due to COVID-19, then the quarantine can end.

- f. Disinfect all facility areas where the staff member or volunteer who has suspected COVID-19 was working (e.g., office space, conference rooms, sacristy, altar area, sanctuary, etc.). See Cleaning and Disinfection section below.
- g. Keep a record of the steps taken to provide notice and to clean and disinfect the facilities.



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#### Protocols (continued)

#### 4. Close contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 – Staff Members and Volunteers

- a. If the individual currently is at a parish location, direct the individual to put on a mask and leave immediately. If the individual is not able to leave immediately, have the person wait in an isolated area and leave as soon as possible. See Exceptions below.
- b. The individual should go home, contact a healthcare provider, and get tested for COVID-19. The individual also should self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact. See Exceptions below. If the individual is tested and the result is negative, the person should continue self-quarantine for the full 14 days (there is currently no option to “test out” of a quarantine). If the result is positive, then follow the Confirmed COVID-19 protocol above. Note that, if the close contact is with a person who was confirmed to have COVID-19, then it is possible, depending on their workload, that the NH Department of Public Health Services (DPHS) will manage the quarantine process and provide a letter (via email) when the quarantine period ends.

If the contact is with a person with *suspected* COVID-19 and that person subsequently tests negative or it is determined by a healthcare professional that their symptoms are not due to COVID-19, then the quarantine can end.

- c. Allow the staff member or volunteer to return to a parish facility after 14 days or, if DPHS is managing their quarantine, when they provide a copy of the DPHS letter ending their quarantine.
- d. Keep a record of the steps taken to provide notice and to clean and disinfect the facilities.

#### 5. Travel– Staff Members and Volunteers

- a. Domestic travel within the U.S. no longer requires quarantine upon return to NH (regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status), this includes domestic travel to U.S. territories.
- b. People who travel internationally (except for essential travel to/from Canada), or on a cruise ship are still required to self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to NH. See exceptions below.

“Essential travel” to/from Canada includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, or parental shared custody. Essential travel also includes travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays.

- c. Note that there is currently no option to “test out” of quarantine.
- d. If, during the quarantine period, the individual develops unexplained COVID-19 symptoms, the person should contact a healthcare provider and get tested. See Suspected COVID-19 above.



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#### 6. Exceptions

Individuals do NOT need to stay home (quarantine) for 14 days or get tested for COVID-19 if either of the following apply:

1. They have been fully vaccinated, i.e., 14 days have elapsed since they received the second vaccine for a two-dose vaccine (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna), or 14 days have elapsed since they received a single-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson and Johnson).
2. They have previously tested positive for active COVID-19 infection (by PCR or antigen testing) in the last 90 days (if they had a previous infection that was more than 90 days ago, then they still need to follow all of these guidelines).

However, they still need to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, always wear a face mask when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene at all times. If they develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should contact their healthcare provider and refrain from coming to the parish for any reason until cleared by their provider.

#### Cleaning and Disinfection

If an infected or potentially infected person has been in a parish facility in the last 7 days prior to their test date or the date symptoms first appeared, then this procedure must be followed. These guidelines are based on CDC recommendations [for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).

1. Close off areas used by the person. It may be necessary to vacate the building(s) until this procedure has been completed if the individual used or was in a large number of rooms or common areas.
2. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area wherever possible.
3. Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
4. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the infected or potentially infected person, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, church sanctuary, and shared electronic equipment.
5. Vacuum the spaces used by the person using a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.

Note:

- Use only [EPA COVID-19 approved](#) cleaning and disinfecting products.
- Once all areas that have been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
- People without close contact with the person with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- If more than 7 days has passed since the person visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

#### Professional Intensive Cleaning



Diocese of Manchester

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For large areas (e.g. a church sanctuary, or specialty areas such as a commercial kitchen) we recommend that a parish utilize a professional company that can perform this service without potentially exposing staff members to the virus and has experience with the process.

One such company that has been vetted is Burke Emergency Restoration (603-716-2921). If you would like to utilize their services, please contact Rob Eib, Director of Real Estate and Construction (reib@rcbm.org, office: 603-663-0111, cell: 603-702-0569). Rob has already set up a standard agreement, pricing, and the required proof of insurance.

### Additional Information or Questions

If you need additional information or questions contact:

- Dennis Honan, Director of Operations and Administration (603-663-0112, cell: 603-828-4490, dhonan@rcbm.org); or
- Meredith Cook, Chancellor (603-663-0148, cell: 603-785-1864, mcook@rcbm.org)



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#### Sample Communications

*We recently learned that one individual who has been in the Parish tested positive for COVID-19. This individual last visited the Parish on DATE. The New Hampshire Department of Public Health has been informed and we are working with them on identifying those who could have been in close contact with this person/these people, and Public Health is contacting those who have been in close contact.*

*As you know, our parish has been following guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control, State of New Hampshire, and the Diocese of Manchester, including wearing masks, social distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting. At this time, we do not believe that anyone, other than those already contacted, were in close contact with this individual. If you have concerns or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, we urge you to contact your healthcare provider. The well-being of our staff, volunteers and parishioners is of paramount importance.*

*May Christ, the Divine Physician, grant continuing skill and enduring strength to our health care workers and healing and hope to all those who are ill. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.*

*I have learned that a parishioner tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. This individual is doing well, and I know you will join me in praying for continued health for this and all persons impacted by COVID-19. The individual last was at the Parish on DATE.*

*Our parishioner has done all the right things - self-isolation, contact with local health authorities, and our Parish. We also contacted the New Hampshire Division of Public Health, and we have been informed that the State has conducted contact tracing. We provided information about our COVID-19 procedures here in the Parish, and in light of all of the information, the Division of Public Health Services advised there was no exposure to parishioners, employees, or visitors at the Parish.*

*We will continue to clean and disinfect the church after Mass and other Parish facilities on a regular basis in accordance with our procedures. Our collective efforts in wearing a mask, observing social distancing, and other practices will continue to help protect others from contracting COVID-19. For more information about our Parish COVID-19 procedures, please visit [website link].*

*May Christ, the Divine Physician, grant continuing skill and enduring strength to our health care workers and healing and hope to all those who are ill. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.*

#### Sample of a Text or Other Brief Communication

*We learned that two parishioners tested positive for COVID-19. Both are home and said to be recovering well. The State has handled contact tracing for both and reports no exposure at our Parish. We will keep you posted, and we will keep up with our precautions. Stay well, and please keep our parishioners in your prayers. – Fr. Sample*