

STANDARD 3.19	Attendance at Work and Respiratory Virus Symptoms	DOMAIN People and Teams
Sponsor: Chief Executive Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer		Date Approved: October 16, 2024
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Lead(s): Corporate Director, Occupational Health, Safety, and Wellness, Human Resources <small>For further information please contact covenantpolicy@covenanthealth.ca</small>		

Purpose Statement:

To outline the expectations for workers to not attend work at a **Covenant Health setting** when the worker exhibits **respiratory virus symptoms**.

Alberta Health Services document **1188 Attendance at Work and Respiratory Virus Symptoms** is adapted/adopted for use by Covenant Health.

Applicability:

Compliance with this standard is required by all Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health (including contracted service providers).

Responsibility:

All Covenant Health facilities, staff, medical staff, students, volunteers and any other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health.

Principles:

This standard applies to **worker** attendance at a Covenant Health setting when the worker exhibits respiratory virus symptoms. This standard applies to all Covenant Health settings.

Nothing in this standard prevents a Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or Covenant Health leadership from establishing or implementing an exemption process for work restrictions, or from setting additional work restrictions, for example, in the event of an outbreak.

Elements:

1. Restriction from Work

- 1.1 If a worker has respiratory virus symptoms, the worker is restricted from work until at least 24 hours have elapsed after all of the following conditions have been met:
 - a) the worker's respiratory virus symptoms have improved;
 - b) the worker is fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medications); and

c) the worker has not developed any new respiratory virus symptoms.

- 1.2 While restricted from work, a worker shall not attend work or any other function at a Covenant Health setting (except for the purposes of receiving health services).
- 1.3 If a worker is unable to return to work after satisfying the criteria in Section 1.1, the [Sick Leave and Salary Continuation Policy](#) shall apply.

2. Continuous Masking

- 2.1 A worker returning to work after having respiratory virus symptoms may still be potentially infectious and is therefore recommended to continuously mask and perform thorough hand hygiene for five (5) calendar days, starting from the first day that the worker is eligible to return to work (as per Section 1.1 above), when working in any Covenant Health setting where they are going to be in contact with other people (e.g., other workers, patients, visitors, members of the public).

3. Reporting

- 3.1 Work absences due to the requirements of Section 1.1 shall be managed and communicated in accordance with the applicable collective agreement or [Sick Leave and Salary Continuation Policy](#).
- 3.2 Members of the Covenant Health Medical Staff shall ensure that they have arranged for sufficient coverage to address any patient care needs that may arise during the period of their absence, as required pursuant to the [Covenant Health Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules](#) and the [AHS Midwifery Staff Bylaws and Rules](#).
- 3.3 If a worker is aware that they have had a workplace exposure to a respiratory virus and this is the likely cause of their respiratory virus symptoms, the worker shall report the exposure to the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness as required pursuant to the [Reporting of Incidents, Injury, Illness & Near Misses Policy](#).

Definitions:

Covenant Health setting means any environment where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by, on behalf of, or in conjunction with, Covenant Health. This includes but is not necessarily restricted to all land, facilities, affiliated sites, mobile equipment and vehicles owned, leased, or rented, and Covenant Health corporate offices for the purpose of conducting Covenant Health business. It does not include working remotely from home.

Respiratory virus symptoms include any one (1) of the following symptoms that are new or worsening and not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition:

- a) fever or chills;

- b) runny or stuffy nose;
- c) sore throat;
- d) cough;
- e) difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; or
- f) loss or altered sense of taste/smell.

Worker means Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and contracted service providers (including anyone providing services for Covenant Health on behalf of a contracted service provider).

Relevant Covenant Health Policy and Policy Support Documents:	
A.	Policies: II-180 Duty to Accommodate Policy and Procedure: Injury, Illness and/or Disability II-165 Influenza Immunization and Outbreak Management VI-10 Hand Hygiene II-105 Sick Leave and Salary Continuation
B.	Procedures: VI-10.PROC.1 Hand Hygiene Procedures II-105.PROC.1 Sick Leave and Salary Continuation Procedures
C.	Guidelines:
D.	Job aids: OHS&W Influenza Outbreak Protocol Influenza Outbreak Work Restriction Table Outbreak Management
E.	Standards:
Keywords:	
References: Alberta Health Services Governance Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at Work Policy (#1130) • Communicable Disease Assessment Policy (#HCS-264) • Hand Hygiene Policy (#PS-02) • Hand Hygiene Procedure (#PS-02-01) • Managing Students Involved in Placements During a Communicable Disease Outbreak, Epidemic, or Pandemic Guideline (#1158-01) • Medical Staff Rules • Midwifery Staff Rules 	

- Workplace Accommodation Policy (#1156)
- Workplace Health and Safety Incident Reporting and Investigation Standard (#WHS- PCS-06).

Past Revisions:

Previously called “Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact”

March 24, 2023

July 20, 2022

Alberta Health Services document **1188 Attendance at Work and Respiratory Virus Symptoms** is adapted/adopted for use by Covenant Health.

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