COVID-19 TEMPERATURE PROCEDURE GUIDANCE

(Version 1 – Updated: May 5, 2020)

People with COVID-19 have experienced a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19. This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea
- Diarrhea

A fever is a body temperature that is higher than normal. While typically 98.6°F (37.0°C) is considered a "normal" temperature, some studies have shown that "normal" body temperature can be within a wide range, from 97°F (36.1°C) to 99°F (37.2°C). A fever is not a disease. It is usually a sign that your body is trying to fight an illness or infection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a measured temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or greater, or feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish. **Infections** cause most fevers. You get a fever because your body is trying to kill the virus or bacteria that caused the infection. Most of those bacteria and viruses do well when your body is at your normal temperature. If you have a fever, it is harder for them to survive. Fever also activates your body's immune system.

Measuring a person's temperature can be done in several ways. One method to measure a person's surface temperature is with the use of non-contact infrared thermometers (NCITs). NCITs may be used to reduce cross-contamination risk and minimize the risk of spreading disease.

Before NCITs are used, it is important to understand the benefits, limitations, and proper use of these thermometers. **Improper use of NCITs may lead to inaccurate measurements of temperature.**

The EEOC has issued its **guidance**, confirming specifically that the COVID-19 pandemic permits employers to measure employees' body temperatures before allowing them to enter the worksite. Any screenings should be implemented on a nondiscriminatory basis, and all information obtained should be treated as confidential medical information under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—specifically, the identity of workers exhibiting a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms should only be shared with members of company management with a true need to know. Additionally, employers should understand that screening employees' temperatures is just one of the screening devices that employers may utilize and will not completely mitigate the risk of contagion, as some people with COVID-19 do not have a fever and may also otherwise be contagious without experiencing any symptoms.

In light of the complexities associated with taking employee temperatures, employers should carefully review the terms of local and state orders recommending or requiring temperature checks. If an employer elects to administer the tests, it should explore engaging a third-party healthcare vendor or other medical professional to advise on, and potentially run, such a program. As orders and recommendations are developing rapidly, employers should track emerging guidance applicable to their facilities.

Employers need to establish what temperature parameters will be used to allow employees into the workplace, as well as what temperature parameters will be used to dismiss employees from the workplace to home.

It is most conservative to treat temperature test facilitators/administrators as a high/very high exposure risk since they likely will be in close proximity to a large number of workers, including potentially infectious individuals. Workers in that risk category must be supplied with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). OSHA advises that such workers likely need to wear gloves, a gown, a face shield or goggles, and either a face mask or a respirator (*e.g.*, an N95 filtering face piece), depending on their job tasks and exposure risks. Employers should review OSHA's PPE standards at 29 CFR 1910 Subpart I and Respiratory Protection standard, 29 CFR 1910.134 for selection, training, and other applicable requirements, but from a basic process standpoint, test facilitators or administrators should take the following steps: (1) perform hand hygiene; (2) don appropriate PPE; (3) check temperature; (4) remove and properly discard PPE; and (5) perform hand hygiene. Employers also should ensure that hand hygiene facilities (*e.g.*, sink or alcohol-based hand rub) are readily available at or adjacent to the temperature station.

- Gloves should be changed and hand hygiene performed with $\geq$ 60% alcohol-based hand rub <u>between each</u> individual screening.
- Respirator/ facemask and safety glasses should be disposed, or reprocessed/ stored <u>after screening intervals</u> according to company, CDC, OSHA guidelines.

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Benefits of NCITs

- Non-contact approach may reduce the risk of spreading disease between people being evaluated
- Easy to use
- Easy to clean and disinfect
- Measures temperature and displays a reading rapidly
- Provides ability to retake a temperature quickly

Limitations of NCITs

- How and where the NCIT is used may affect the measurement (for example: head covers, environment, positioning on forehead, etc.).
- The close distance required to properly take a person's temperature represents a risk of spreading disease between the person using the device and the person being evaluated.

Proper Use of NCITs

The person using the device should **strictly follow the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions for use** for the specific NCIT being used. The manufacturer's instructions for use typically include the following information and recommendations for proper use:

- If applicable, Screener ensures thermometer has been calibrated according to manufacturer guidelines and is in proper working condition. Use probe covers or disinfect per guidelines between each individual screening.
- Before conducting screenings, Screener reads and understands how to use the thermometer according to manufacturer guidelines, including what temperature/ range is considered above/ below normal.

Preparing the Environment and NCIT

The use environment may impact the performance of the NCIT. Instructions will typically include recommendations for optimal use, such as the following:

- Use in a draft-free space and out of direct sun or near radiant heat sources.
- Determine if conditions are optimal for use. Typically, the environmental temperature should be between 60.8-104 ºF (16-40 ºC) and relative humidity below 85 percent.
- Place the NCIT in the testing environment or room for 10-30 minutes prior to use to allow the NCIT to adjust to the environment following the manufacturer's instructions.
- If possible, set up screening area close to entrance, with a barrier between screener and people being screened; private room with door closed; or outside to afford as much infection control as possible.
- Indicate participant waiting spots in 6 ft. increment(s) to maintain social distancing and confidentiality.
- Ensure temperature/ symptom recordkeeping materials (i.e. log) are available.

PPE Recommended for Temperature Test Facilitators/Administrators and Employees/Visitors

- Disposable or launderable infection control gown/coveralls
- N95 or equivalent/ greater protection (requires respiratory protection program involving medical clearance, fit testing, and training on seal checking and donning/ doffing). At minimum, a surgical mask for the screener and a surgical or cloth mask for the individual if respirator not available or Screener not medically cleared, fit tested, and trained to use a respirator per OSHA guidelines.
- Safety eyewear
- Disposable non-latex gloves

Cleaning Between Uses

For cleaning NCITs between uses, follow the instructions in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of the product instructions. Most NCITs should never be immersed in water or other liquids.

Preparing the Person being Evaluated

Individuals being screened MUST wear/don cloth or disposable facemask prior to being screened. If the person does not have a mask, set out a disposable facemask for them to don while maintaining social distancing.

Conduct screening in the following order:

- First, ask person if they have/had any COVID-19 symptoms (refer to health check guidelines/ log) since last at work/screening (employees) or within the last 14 days (visitors) or if they feel feverish (chills, sweating, flushed). If any symptoms, STOP and exclude from accessing building per company policy and procedure.
- Second, move around barrier as needed to take the person's temperature according to thermometer manufacturer instructions and record. If temperature is below 97°F or above 99°F, retake the temperature a second time and record. If 2nd temperature indicates fever, STOP and exclude from accessing building per company policy and procedure.
- If steps 1 and 2 are negative, ask remaining questions and allow/exclude access according to the screening parameters (refer to health check guidelines/ log).

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Using the NCIT

As previously noted, the person using the device should **strictly follow the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions for use** for the specific NCIT being used. In particular, the following are typical instructions for NCIT usage.

In preparation for taking a temperature measurement with an NCIT, the person using the NCIT should typically ensure that:

- The test area of the forehead is clean, dry and not blocked during measurement.
- The person's body temperature or temperature at the forehead test area has not been increased or decreased by perspiration, wearing excessive clothing or head covers (for example headbands, bandanas), by using facial cleansing products (for example cosmetic wipes), or being in an excessive warm or cold environment.
- Some NCIT devices advise obtaining a temperature behind the earlobe.
- Hold the NCIT sensing area *perpendicular* to the forehead and instruct the person to remain stationary during measurement(s). (See Figure 1)
- The distance between the NCIT and forehead is specific to each NCIT. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for correct measurement distances.
- Do not touch the sensing area of the NCIT and keep the sensor clean and dry.
- If applicable, Screener ensures thermometer has been calibrated according to manufacturer guidelines and is in proper working condition. Use probe covers or disinfect per guidelines between each individual screening.

Figure 1: Correct Use – Forehead unobstructed, and NCIT held perpendicular to front of forehead; and used at distance identified in manufacturer's instructions.

Figure 2: Incorrect Use – Not perpendicular to forehead

Figure 3: Incorrect Use – Forehead exposed to direct sunlight outdoors

Elevated Temperature Readings:

- For elevated temperature readings slightly above company temperature parameter, the person can be discreetly placed in a waiting area for five to ten minutes to retake their temperature.
- If subsequent readings are elevated, please advise the employee to go home and seek medical attention.
- Temperature readings one part of a COVID-19 screening.
- Please refer to M3's **Temperature and Symptom Screening Procedure document.**

References:

- **https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/general-hospital-devices-and-supplies/non-contact-infrared-thermometers**
- **https://medlineplus.gov/fever.html**
- **https://www.wilmerhale.com/en/insights/client-alerts/20200403-screening-employee-temperatures-what-employers-need-to-know**
- **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html**
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