*Instructions:
The content in bracketed red text throughout this document is intended to be replaced with your event’s information or deleted after completing any bracketed red instructions. Once you have added your specific information as instructed, delete any remaining red instructional text and the brackets, changing all font to BLACK where necessary.*

# INTRODUCTION

This COVID-19 Supplemental Response Toolkit recognizes that COVID-19 will remain with us for the foreseeable future, and we need to be ready with the tools and resources we will need to respond quickly. This supplemental plan is provided as part of our duty of care standards for COVID-19 which targets preventing spread at an event and notifying participants of potential exposure.

**READINESS**

COVID-19 isn’t going away, and we need to be ready to address the needs. We should advise participants prior to the event about prevention strategies that will be in place at the event as well as any reporting requirements and procedures. This will help them plan their attendance and, potentially, to manage an exposure or illness during the in-person event. This content should be posted on your event’s website, and we recommend it be sent as an email communication to all confirmed participants (organizers, event staff, participants, speakers, exhibitors) as a ‘*Know Before You Go’* notification.

You can customize the website and content of email templates, included below, for your event wherever bracketed red text appears. If you have any questions about implementing a participant health and safety page on your event website, please contact us at eert@ieee.org. As part of your reporting, we ask that you please reach out to eert@ieee.org to advise of any positive cases that occur at your event for IEEE’s tracking purposes as well as any guidance that may be needed in line with IEEE protocols.

IEEE also recommends that your onsite event team be prepared to support participants by having resources available should a need arise, as follows:

* COVID-19 Rapid Self testing kits\*
* Kn95 Masks
* List of local testing site locations and recommended transportation providers
* List of emergency medical facilities/hospitals
* Available support services to aid in their potential quarantine or isolation needs:
	+ Contact details for assistance with necessary hotel accommodation modifications
	+ Venue emergency services hotline/point of contact
	+ Available options for meal accommodations
	+ Local health authority contact details, should there be a need for a reporting a positive case

\*Note: Please remember, when purchasing COVID-19 Rapid self-testing kits in an event host location, the instructions of such testing kits will most likely be in the local language (e.g., German, French, Chinese, etc.). Translation of such testing kit instructions may be necessary for the individual of need.

For large scale events, it is recommended the event hire an onsite EMT to engage with participants in need as part of your risk management strategy, should the conference budget allow for this expense.

Most venues have a step-by-step emergency guide detailing various emergency protocols. In many cases, the procedures may be different in a large venue than they would be in your home (e.g., you may call the venue’s security team BEFORE calling 911, contrary to your instinct). You should review these procedures as part of your planning for reference, should a need arise while onsite at the event.

# EVENT WEBSITE CONTENT

**Event Safety During the Pandemic**

***Updated August 16, 2022***

The [insert event name]is fast approaching, and we look forward to welcoming you to the event on [insert dates] at the [insert venue and location].

Your health and safety remain our top priority for the event, and we will practice protocols that reflect a spirit of respect and care for our community throughout the event. We will continue to actively monitor local- and country-specific guidelines related to COVID-19 case management and evolve our policies as needed.

**Masks
*[****Modify/update this topic area as required for your specific event protocols/requirements.]*
In accordance with local guidance, protective masks are now optional indoors. At this time, [insert event name] does not intend to require participants to wear protective masks while attending the event.

All participants should feel safe and comfortable while attending the event. We ask that all participants be respectful of the mask-wearing and social-distancing preferences of their fellow participants. Masks will be available at registration, if needed.

**COVID-19 Testing** *[Modify/update this topic area as required for your specific event protocols/requirements.]*Although not required, participants are encouraged to consider taking a COVID-19 test before traveling to the event and if they become symptomatic at any time during the event.

**COVID Symptoms and Positive COVID-19 Protocols**

Should you feel unwell and develop symptoms related to COVID-19 while attending the event, please stay masked and quarantined (if possible) until you are able to test. Contact the onsite management team at *[insert contact information]* as soon as possible so your situation can be monitored and supported, as needed. Doing so will allow the team to take appropriate precautionary measures for the health and well-being of fellow participants.

Guidance on acquiring a rapid test or accessing local testing locations can be found at *[insert WEBSITE LINK]* or by contacting the event management team at [*insert contact information].* **Please do not go to the registration desk.**

Out of an abundance of caution, we ask you to take the following steps:

**Step 1:**   Take a COVID-19 rapid test as soon as possible, staying masked and quarantined (if possible) pending testing and results. Until you take a rapid test and receive results, it is recommended you refrain from attending the in-person conference sessions and events and wear a mask if it is necessary to be in public places outside the event.

If you test negative for COVID-19 after becoming symptomatic while attending the event, please use your best judgment to determine whether you should resume attending conference sessions or events and/or continue to wear a mask in public places, bearing in mind the potential for false negatives on early tests. Please consider both your own health and safety as well as the health and safety of other conference participants.

**Step 2:** If you test positive while attending the event, you must promptly notify the onsite event management team at *[insert contact information]* so they can:

* provide further guidance on isolation requirements in concert with venue personnel
* offer support as needed (hotel accommodation modifications and connection to local medical providers/emergency centers if necessary)

You should refrain from attending conference sessions and events and continue to wear a mask in public places outside the event.

*All communication and information in support of your situation will remain confidential in line with data privacy regulations.*

**U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Protocols**

*[This content/references should be modified to represent the appropriate host country’s leading health authority resource]*

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a set of protocols that you should follow if you are feeling unwell, displaying COVID-19 symptoms or test positive while visiting the United States:

* If you come into [close contact](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact)  with someone with COVID-19: follow CDC’s [recommendations for quarantine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html).
* If you [test positive](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html) for COVID-19 or have [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html): follow CDC’s [recommendations for isolation](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html).
* Take precautions for travel;  [recommendations for domestic and international travel](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html).

*Note: If your country of origin is outside of [insert host location/country] we recommend you review the guidance provided by your local health authorities for COVID-19 protocols for scheduling your return home.*

As an in-person participant of the conference, you represent and certify that:

* I support *[insert event name/acronym]* COVID-19 Safety Measures and will follow its COVID-19 policies and procedures.
* I acknowledge that attending the conference is of value to me and that I accept the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 to attend. Therefore, I choose to accept the risk of exposure to COVID-19, and I agree that I am personally responsible for my safety and actions while attending the conference.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us. Thank you for your understanding and support!

We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference!

# ONSITE LOCATION TEAM LEAD and RESPONSE TEAM

As part of your planning, you should identify your location response team and the team lead who will establish a COVID-19 operations center to:

* coordinate and monitor the implementation of precautionary measures,
* manage all COVID-19-related activities (e.g., surveillance and management of suspected and confirmed cases),
* supervise onsite event staff, as needed.

This person is responsible for sharing information on applied precautionary measures, ensuring that they are followed correctly, and facilitating detection and management of COVID-19 cases in concert with event leadership.

Your onsite team lead will have the following responsibilities related to reported illness:

* Serve as the point of contact listed in published information related to symptom and illness reporting and management.
* Communicate directly with participants who become ill onsite regarding symptoms and/or positive test results for COVID-19, possible quarantine/isolation situations, and obtaining medical care.
* Follow through on contact-tracking and communications as needed, following privacy protection guidelines.
* Communicate with venue and other key personnel involved in management of the illness.
* Ensure appropriate documentation is made and notification is sent to IEEE eert@ieee.org.

# COVID SCENARIOS and ACTION STEPS

EERT has developed a set of scenarios, described below, as part of our risk assessment plan to facilitate and guide the decision-making process in the context of COVID-19.  The plan is meant to be adaptable and flexible based on potential positive case(s).

The various communication templates provided for each scenario provide baseline information and/or instructions based on the scenario of need.  These may be modified as necessary based on the unique circumstances presented at the time of need.  Scenarios and communication templates included below include:

* **Suspected Case:** *directed to person who reports feeling unwell with symptoms related to COVID-19*
* **Confirmed Case**: *directed to person who reports they have tested positive while in attendance at the event and/or upon return home*
* **Potential Exposure: Confirmed Case – Specific Session/Event:** *directed to a group of participants who have been in proximity to a symptomatic person*
* **Potential Exposure: Confirmed Cases – All Event:**  *directed* *to all event participants IF directed by EERT based on established alert threshold*

#### ***SUSPECTED CASE***

Follow these steps upon receiving notification that someone does not feel well and indicates they are symptomatic related to COVID-19.

 **ACTION REQUIRED: On-site Location Team Lead**

1. Follow CDC [*or host country/location]* guidelines. Recommend that the individual quarantine in their hotel room and self- test as soon as possible and that they wear a mask until test results are determined.
2. Provide a mask and self-test kit, if needed.
3. Confirm affected individual’s contact information (mobile # and email).
4. Send appropriate scenario email to affected individual (see template below: “C*ommunication to Affected Participant/Suspected Case*”)
5. Determine all session(s) and event(s) the affected individual attended.
6. Determine affected participant’s category: speaker/presenting author, general event participant, vendor, IEEE Staff, conference organizer, IEEE volunteer, etc. This information helps you to further determine potential exposure at specific functions during your event as well as actions to take related to notification.
7. Follow protocol outlined in *CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASE* section, below, if participant tests positive.

**COMMUNICATION TO AFFECTED PARTICIPANT: SUSPECTED CASE**

*(This email will be addressed to a single person)*

*Hello,*

*Thank you for informing us that you are not feeling well. If you believe you may be symptomatic related to COVID-19, out of an abundance of caution we recommend that you remain in, or return to, your hotel room pending access to a test and receipt of the results.*

*IEEE recommends following the CDC guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*, as well as Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel detailed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html)*. We recommend that you review the guidelines and decide what is best given your situation.  Please pay specific attention to the guidelines to be followed for the unvaccinated, those feeling unwell and those testing positive.*

*If you need assistance, please contact [insert point of contact] via this email address [insert email address] or call [Insert point of contact first and last name] at [insert mobile number]. We ask that all communication be through phone or email pending your test results. PLEASE DO NOT GO TO THE REGISTRATION DESK.*

*In the event of an emergency, please call 911 for immediate assistance.*

*We are here to assist you and can provide the following support:*

* *Access to a rapid test*
* *Information on local testing site locations, medical care facilities, drug store/pharmacies and recommended transportation providers*
* *Assistance with access to meals*

*During this time, please consider the potential for having to adjust your hotel reservation to accommodate the need to quarantine, pending test results, or isolate in the case of a positive result.*

*PLEASE NOTE that this notice will be anonymous and all communication and information in support of your situation will remain confidential in line with data privacy regulations.*

*Your health and safety are of the utmost importance, and we wish you a swift recovery.*

*Thank you,*

*[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*

**CONFIRMED CASE**

**ACTION REQUIRED: Onsite Location Team Lead**

1. Ask that the individual isolate in their hotel room immediately and advise that, for the safety of all event participants, they should not participate in any in-person event activities.
2. Notify hotel point of contact of a confirmed case.
3. Contact eert@ieee.org (if needed) for assessment and recommended actions.
4. Confirm affected individual’s contact information (mobile # and email).
5. Send appropriate scenario email to affected individual (see template below: “C*ommunication to Affected Participant/Confirmed Case*”)
6. Determine whether the COVID-positive participant reported a suspected case and provided a list of sessions and events they attended at that time. If so, contact the individual to get an updated list for the past 48 hours.
7. If the affected participant *did not* report the suspected case and provide a list at that time, contact the participant to determine all sessions and/or events they attended in the 48 hours prior to receiving a positive test result.
8. Develop a list of potentially exposed participants based on the registration lists of the sessions and/or events the affected person attended in the prior 48 hours.
9. Determine affected participant’s category: speaker/presenting author, general event participant, vendor, IEEE Staff, conference organizer, IEEE volunteer, etc. This information helps you to further determine potential exposure at specific functions during your event as well as actions to take related to notification. If the individual who reports a positive case is an IEEE employee, an additional action step of copying ‘benefits@ieee.org’ on the email to the individual of the confirmed case will be necessary.
10. Based on a recommendation from EERT, follow protocol outlined in the next section, *CONFIRMED CASE - POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO OTHERS*, below for guidance on sending the COMMUNICATION TO A GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS – SPECIFIC SESSION/EVENT – POTENTIAL EXPOSURE email.

**COMMUNICATION TO AFFECTED PARTICIPANT: CONFIRMED CASE**

*(This email will be addressed to a single person)*

 *Hello,*

*Thank you for informing us that you are not feeling well and have tested positive for COVID-19. At this time, out of an abundance of caution, we recommend that you isolate in your hotel room and ask that you refrain from attending any event activities.*

*[Add this text if the individual is an IEEE employee]*

*As an IEEE employee, I am also advising IEEE's Human Resources team via copy to**benefits@ieee.org**of your unfortunate illness for their awareness and any next step actions that may be needed.*

*IEEE recommends following the CDC guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*, as well as Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel detailed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html)*. We recommend that you review the guidelines and decide what is best given your situation.  Please pay specific attention to the guidelines to be followed for the unvaccinated, those feeling unwell and those testing positive.*

*Note:  If your country of origin is outside of the United States, we recommend you review the guidance provided by your local health authorities for COVID-19 protocols for scheduling your return home.*

*If you need assistance, please contact [insert point of contact] via this email address [insert email address] or call [Insert point of contact first and last name] at [insert mobile number]. We ask that all communication be through phone or email for the remainder of the event. DO NOT GO TO THE REGISTRATION DESK.*

*In the event of an emergency, please call 911 for immediate assistance.*

*We are here to assist you and can provide the following support:*

* *Assistance with access to meals*
* *Information on local medical care facilities, drug store/pharmacies and recommended transportation providers*

*During this time, please consider the potential for having to adjust your hotel reservation to accommodate the need to isolate for the duration of your stay.*

*We ask that you reply to this email and let us know what sessions and events you attended in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or the positive test (if asymptomatic).*

*PLEASE NOTE that this notice will be anonymous and all communication and information in support of your situation will remain confidential in line with data privacy regulations.*

*Your health and safety are of the utmost importance, and we wish you a swift recovery.*

*Thank you,*

 *[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*

#### **POTENTIAL EXPOSURE**: ***CONFIRMED CASE – SPECIFIC SESSION/EVENT***

**ACTION REQUIRED: Onsite Location Team Lead**

Within two hours of receiving confirmation of a positive case from a participant, and with direction from EERT, follow these guidelines for alerting potentially exposed event participants:

1. Determine whether the COVID-positive participant reported a suspected case and provided a list of sessions and events they attended at that time. If so, contact the individual to get an updated list for the past 48 hours.
2. If the affected participant *did not* report the suspected case and provide a list at that time, contact the participant to determine all sessions and/or events they attended in the 48 hours prior to receiving a positive test result.
3. Obtain, or create the list of the names and email addresses of all registered participants of the sessions and/or events the affected participant attended in the prior 48 hours (removing duplicates for those attending multiple common sessions/events.)
4. Using the template below, send the email to all those on the list. Send a copy to EERT.

**COMMUNICATION TO A GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS: POTENTIAL EXPOSURE - SPECIFIC SESSION/EVENT**

*(This email will be addressed to a group of people identified from pertinent session or event registration list(s))*

*We have recently learned that an event participant attended [insert session/event name] on [ date/time of session/event] and has subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. As we believe you were a participant at the same session or event, we are making you aware of this potential exposure.*

*IEEE is following the U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed*[*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*as well as Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel detailed*[*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html)*.  We recommend that you review the guidelines and decide what is best given your situation. Please pay specific attention to the guidelines to be followed for the unvaccinated, those feeling unwell, and those testing positive.*

*Please notify us if you begin to feel unwell or develop any symptoms by emailing [Insert onsite team lead name and contact information]. If you feel it becomes necessary to test for COVID-19, please quarantine pending the opportunity to do so and let us know of your condition so we can provide support for you as well as notification to your fellow participants as may be necessary.*

*PLEASE NOTE that all communication and information in support of your situation will remain confidential in line with data privacy regulations.*

*While masks are not required at the event and this notification is of potential exposure, IEEE encourages those who prefer to wear a well-fitting mask to do so.   All participants should be respectful of the mask-wearing and social-distancing preferences of their fellow participants.  Each participant should assess their own personal risk when making this decision.*

*If you have specific questions, please contact the management team at [team lead or other contact information].*

*Sincerely,*

*[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

#### **POTENTIAL EXPOSURE: CONFIRMED CASES - ALL EVENT**

In the event it becomes necessary to communicate to all event participants of potential COVID-19 exposure, we provide the below communication template for this purpose. There is no specific formula to help set a positive case threshold for determining when a broad communication like this should be distributed. It is subjective based on review and consultation with IEEE’s event emergency response team, determined by the number of positive cases as well as the event functions identified where potential exposure may have occurred.

**COMMUNICATION TO ALL PARTICIPANTS: POTENTIAL EXPOSURE – EVENT**

*(This email will be sent to all event participants AT THE DISCRETION AND DIRECTION OF EERT based on pre-determined case thresholds and other criteria.)*

**Communication to all participants should not be sent until thorough review and consultation with EERT.**

*Subject Line: PLEASE READ – [Insert Name of Event] | COVID-19 COMMUNICATION*

*Hello,*

*We would like to inform you that a confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on [insert date] at the [insert name of event, location, venue, and date].  Our records indicate that you are or were attending this event; therefore, we are contacting you to make you aware of this potential exposure.*

*IEEE is following the CDC guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*, as well as Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel detailed* [*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html)*.  We recommend that you review the guidelines and decide what is best given your situation.  Please pay specific attention to the guidelines to be followed for the unvaccinated, those feeling unwell and those testing positive.*

*If you become symptomatic while at the event, please…. [Add the pertinent content from the site and provide contact information]*

*Sincerely,*

*[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*

**POST EVENT – REPORTING, TRACKING, and COMMUNICATION**

After your meeting is over, no news is good news when it comes to COVID. Unfortunately, however, you may receive a report from one or more of your participants that they tested positive upon their return home. As always, your first consideration will be the health and safety of the reporting individual as well as the other participants at your event.  Certain actions may be helpful or required to minimize exposure.

The first step is information gathering:

* When did the participant test positive in relation to your event dates and what were the likely other sources for infection (such as at home before or after the event, while traveling, or engaging in other activities at the event destination)?
* What was the level of infection in that community at the time of the event?

In almost all cases, it will be important to advise the reporting participant to immediately contact any individuals with whom they were in direct contact during the event.  The individual may self-report on social media out of consideration to other participants. It is important to track and monitor reported positive cases, and based on this specific tracking, we can jointly determine a positive case threshold in which it would warrant further broad communications of potential exposure.

**COMMUNICATION TO INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT: Confirmed Case – Post Event**

*I am reaching out to you with regard to notification received indicating you had tested positive for COVID upon your return home from the [insert name of event].  We thank you for notifying us of this out of an abundance of caution for your fellow colleagues and for our tracking purposes.*

*We are very sorry to learn you are feeling unwell.  We do hope your symptoms remain mild and that you have a swift recovery.*

*Please be advised to follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed*[*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*.*

*Please do take care and we wish you well as you recover.*

Sincerely,

*[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*

**COMMUNICATION TO ALL PARTICIPANTS: POTENTIAL EXPOSURE – POST EVENT**

Dear [Insert name of event] Participant:

*Thank you for joining us at [Insert name of event] and we hope you returned home safely.   We are reaching out to make you aware we have been notified of several positive COVID-19 cases from individuals upon their return home from [Insert name of event and location].  Our records indicate you have attended this event and we are making you aware of your potential exposure.*

 *Please be advised to follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines on quarantine & isolation as listed*[*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)*as well as Public Health Guidance for Potential COVID-19 Exposure Associated with Travel detailed*[*here*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html)*.   We recommend that you review the guidelines and decide what is best given your situation.  Please pay specific attention to the guidelines to be followed for the unvaccinated, those feeling unwell and those testing positive.*

*If your country of origin is outside of the U.S., we recommend you review the guidance provided by your local health authorities for COVID-19 protocols for your health and safety.*

*We encourage you to continue to monitor your health and do what is best given your individual situation.*

*We thank you for your continued support of [Insert name of event] and please keep us informed should a need arise.*

*[Team Lead Name]*

*[Event Name] Management Team Lead*