

# Memorandum



## Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

**DATE:** July 1, 2020

**TO:** Agency Presidents

**FROM:** Patrick T. Warren, Chief Safety Officer

**RE:** Interim Employee Health Screening Protocol to Deter Spread of COVID-19

**Purpose:** Establish protocol for the implementation of routine employee health screenings for COVID-19 symptoms to protect employees in the workplace.

**Scope:** This protocol applies to all MTA staff and agencies.

### **Guidance.**

MTA will implement employee health screening procedures to further protect its workforce by proactively identifying and keeping employees out of the workplace, who may be contagious with COVID-19. This is a requirement under the New York State *Interim Guidance for State Agencies and Authorities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency* issued on May 15, 2020. Employees will be provided educational resources to perform required self pre-screening for symptoms along with worksite temperature checks, and employee confirmation of pre-screening at start of shift by using time clock validation or other approved method. Frequent employee communications and broad workforce messaging will be an essential component of this program. The MTA will regularly evaluate the program performance metrics and implement process changes as new recommendations for preventing the spread of COVID-19 become available.

*It is important to note that there will be some individuals who are asymptomatic carriers of the virus, and as a result they will not be identified using pre-screen methods. For this reason, all other COVID-19 safety protocols including the proper practice of social distancing, use of PPE, hand washing, and other personal hygiene practices must continue to be maintained in the workplace.*

### **Requirements.**

MTA Employee COVID-19 Screening Process and components include:

- The MTA COVID-19 Screening Program is reliant upon an engaged and educated workforce. Employees are required to actively participate and perform self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms. Employee information and messaging will reinforce how we are “all in this together” and that screening must be done to protect one another and our families. MTA will focus on having employees conduct a self-screening at home, as symptomatic individuals should not be leaving home and traveling to work locations, potentially contaminating fellow workers and workspaces. Effective communication and messaging to all employees is critical to success.

COVID-19 symptoms include: cough, shortness of breath, trouble breathing, fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, or new loss of senses for taste or smell.

- Employee self-screening actions, as well as the reporting process when an employee determines they have COVID-19 symptoms, will also be covered in the instructional materials, video, and in agency specific procedures developed by the HR departments. Employees are required to view the instructional materials. Materials will be widely distributed and posted on the MTA COVID-19 Resource Center which can be reached at <https://new.mta.info/covid-19/employees>.

- MTA’s 3-step self-screening process:

Step 1: Employee conducts self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms at home. This includes assessing if they have any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, trouble breathing, fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, or new loss of senses for taste or smell. Employees also check for an elevated temperature (100.0 degrees F or higher) and assess whether they may have had any known close and prolonged contact with a person confirmed or suspected<sup>1</sup> to have COVID-19 within the past 14 days. Close and prolonged contact is defined as being at a distance of 6 feet or less for at least 10 minutes, starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the person was isolated. Any employee experiencing one or more symptoms, an elevated temperature, or having had a known close and prolonged contact with a person confirmed or suspected<sup>1</sup> to have COVID-19, must stay home and notify the MTA COVID-19 Hotline at (646-252-1010). Employees should consult their healthcare provider for evaluation, possible testing and isolation, if needed. Employees must also follow all existing absence reporting procedures required by their department or division and notify their direct supervisors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A person who is experiencing an elevated temperature of 100.0°F or more will be treated as Suspected to have COVID-19. A person who displays a COVID-19 symptom, has consulted with their healthcare provider, and has been referred for testing will also be treated as Suspected to have COVID-19.

<sup>2</sup> When an employee displays a symptom (e.g. cough, sore throat) and after 1-2 days the symptom disappears, the employee may return to work. The employee must contact the COVID-19 Hotline and their supervisor to update their status.

Step 2: Temperature Screen. In addition to the self-temperature check conducted by employees at home, at worksite locations where temperature screening is practical, MTA Departments and Agencies will develop and perform procedures to temperature screen their workforce as they arrive for duty. Further, employees that work at critical nodes, (e.g. the Rail Control Center), as designated by their agency, will be screened by the Temperature Brigade at the beginning of their shift. (Note: MTA is reviewing other technologies that may further support temperature checking.) Employees with elevated temperature will be provided a handout advising the employee to call their healthcare provider, supervisor, MTA COVID-19 Hotline and New York State Department of Health Hotline (copy attached).

Step 3: Upon arrival at work, MTA employees by swiping in at a Kronos timekeeping clock or otherwise checking in and reporting for duty, are certifying that they have completed step 1 and for select employees step 2 above, and that they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms, or known close and prolonged contact with a person confirmed or suspected<sup>1</sup> to have COVID-19 within the past 14 days. (Note: MTA is exploring other IT solutions that could make this process more efficient.)

Employees that display any COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and notify the MTA COVID-19 Hotline at (646-252-1010) and their supervisor of their condition. The employee should also contact their healthcare provider and consider getting diagnostic testing.

If an employee displays/develops symptoms at work, they must return home immediately. The employee will call the MTA COVID-19 Hotline at (646-252-1010). The employee should also contact their healthcare provider and consider getting diagnostic testing.

If diagnostic testing or swab test is done, do not return to work until results are obtained.

- MTA Departments and Agencies will prepare all work sites to the extent feasible, and post clear signage at facility entrances, or other appropriate locations, that reinforce the requirements of the employee's home self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Employees should not enter a work location if they are experiencing any of the previously identified COVID-19 symptoms.
- In addition to self-temperature screening, the MTA will use a combination of approaches that accommodate special worksite conditions. For critical nodes (i.e. operations centers and control towers) and at select office buildings, yard facilities and manned stations, the MTA will set up temperature screening stations (administered by the MTA Temperature Brigade). When an employee's temperature is found to be 100.0

degrees F or more, their name will be recorded and the employee directed to return home, contact their healthcare provider and call the COVID-19 Hotline. Alternate procedures to check temperature screens can be developed by MTA departments and agencies. The MTA Safety Office will validate these alternate procedures.

- MTA departments and agencies will install large and unavoidable signs at every timeclock or check-in location (wherever possible) reminding employees of the requirement and their obligation to one another to have performed the self-screen prior to work. Signage will repeat the particular pre-screen requirements and state that “By swiping in at this timeclock, you are verifying that to the best of your ability and consistent with the instruction that you have received; that you have performed and passed the required COVID-19 self-screen and are fit for duty to begin your shift”.
  - Record keeping requirements: The New York State Reopening Guidance requires that each agency maintain a record of all staff who are screened. The electronic record generated when each employee swipes-in, will serve as the record for employees who are not displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Alternate record keeping, now in use by each agency for employees that do not electronically “swipe-in”, will continue to be used and will serve as the record for those employees. Each agency will also need to maintain records of employees that have been held out of the workforce each day because they display any of the symptoms of COVID-19 or having had a known close and prolonged contact. In these cases, employees are required to report into their supervisor and to the MTA COVID-19 Hotline where their status will be recorded and shared with Occupational Health Services (OHS). Employees that have been held out as a result of screening will be recorded in the ServiceNow database when they call into the MTA Covid-19 Hotline. An individual at each agency should be designated as responsible to access these records, as needed, to verify compliance with screening requirements.
  - The screening procedures outlined in this memorandum should be implemented as soon as practicable, but no later than July 6, 2020.
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**Reference:**

CDC guidance of symptoms of COVID-19. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>

[New York State Department of Health HEALTH ADVISORY: COVID-19 UPDATE FOR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT \(LHD\) CONTACT INVESTIGATIONS, April 8, 2020](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh_covid19_lhdcontacttracing_040820.pdf)







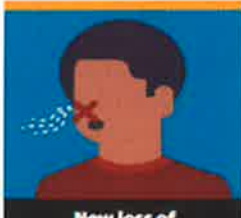
[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh\\_covid19\\_lhdcontacttracing\\_040820.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh_covid19_lhdcontacttracing_040820.pdf)

[New York State Department of Health, Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure, May 31, 2020](https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/news/2020/DOH-COVID-2020May31-Guidance-Pub-Priv-Return-to-Work.pdf)

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**Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:**


 Cough	 Fever	 Chills	 Muscle pain
 Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*	 Sore throat	 New loss of taste or smell	

**Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.**

**\*Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

# TEMPERATURE CHECK PROGRAM

Your temperature is elevated today (100.0 degrees F or higher)

As a precaution, you are being sent home. This elevated temperature does not mean you have COVID-19. It is a sign that you may become symptomatic.

Monitor your temperature at home, and watch for any of these symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle ache
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If you develop any of these symptoms, call your healthcare provider for further medical evaluation. Your healthcare provider will determine if testing is needed.

Please be sure to request a note from your healthcare provider documenting their assessment of your condition and their recommendation for returning to work.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call:

- Healthcare Provider
- Supervisor
- HR Representative
- MTA Hotline – 646-252-1010
- NYS DOH Coronavirus Hotline – 888-364-3065