



Rapid Response COVID-19 Watchlist

New Mexico Environment Department

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a rapid response?

A. State agencies initiate a rapid response when one or more employees tests positive for COVID-19. The goal of a rapid response is to protect employees and customers while minimizing disruptions to the workplace and helping them reopen as soon as it is safe to do so.

Q. What happens during a rapid response?

- A typical rapid response consists of (1) isolating positive cases, (2) quarantining close contacts for 14 days, (3) ceasing operations to the extent necessary to isolate affected areas, (4) disinfecting these areas, (5) implementing safety procedures, and (6) resuming operations. Typically, operations are ceased for less than 24 hours before they are safe to reopen.

Q. Will you conduct a rapid response when an employee tests positive but the employer can document that they were not in the workplace?

- The typical rapid response outlined above will be limited to confirming [COVID-Safe Practices](#) are in effect in these instances. Such cases are not included in the rapid response data posted online or added to the Rapid Response COVID-19 Watchlist.

Q. Are employers required to report to the New Mexico Environment Department all positive employees to the state?

A. Yes. Employers are required to report all COVID-19 positive employees to the state's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau within four hours of learning of the positive test result. To report an instance of a COVID-19 positive employee in a workplace and learn more

about this requirement, click [here](#).

Q. How does a business get on or off the Rapid Response COVID-19 Watchlist?

- If there are two or more rapid responses in the prior 14 calendar days at a location, the business will appear on the Rapid Response COVID-19 Watchlist. The business will remain on the Rapid Response COVID-19 Watchlist until there are less than two rapid responses in the prior 14 calendar days.

Q. How often is the Watchlist updated?

- The Watchlist is updated daily around 3 p.m. Mountain Time.

Q. Why does the Environment Department post this data?

- The New Mexico Environment Department publishes the Watchlist and other rapid response data to provide transparency to the public, as well as offer the public the chance to make more informed decisions about when and which establishments they visit.

Q. When does one rapid response end and another begin?

- Generally, once a rapid response ends and normal operations resume, another positive employee in the workplace then constitutes a second rapid response. There may be one or multiple COVID-19 positive individuals associated with a single rapid response.

Q. Which businesses will close for two weeks once they reach four or more rapid responses in 14 calendar days?

- The closure requirement applies to food and drink establishments, retail spaces, places of lodging, close-contact businesses as defined in the Oct. 23, 2020 public health order, and any other establishment that poses a significant public health risk as determined by the Department of Health.

When there are four or more rapid responses at a location within 14 calendar days, the New Mexico Environment Department will refer the establishment to the Department of Health, which will evaluate and make the decision on establishment closure. An establishment may be permitted to continue operating if the Department of Health, after consultation with the New Mexico Environment Department, determines that the business is a sole provider of goods or services within a community.

Q. Who will enforce the public health order requirement to shut down?

- The New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Environment Department and all other State departments and agencies are authorized to take all appropriate steps to ensure compliance with this order. Report violations of the

public health order [here](#).

Q. What are the consequences for a business that does not follow the Public Health Order?

A. Failure to comply with the Public Health Order may result in penalties up to \$5,000 per day by the New Mexico Department of Health and legal action. In addition, other state agencies may separately initiate enforcement proceedings against the business.