

June 30, 2020

Riverbend Nursery Statement on COVID-19 Case

Riverbend Nursery takes the health and safety of our employees, customers, and communities very seriously. With this in mind, we want to share that last week we received word that one of our employees tested positive for COVID-19. We are all wishing the employee a speedy recovery and that the rest of us and our communities stay healthy.

Viruses don't respect state or county borders and there has been a recent uptick in confirmed cases in our region. Several weeks ago, our management team put together a COVID-19 Response Plan that is based on CDC guidelines and best practices. I want to share some of the details around this plan along with additional measures we are taking in dealing with this fluid situation.

Within 30 minutes of learning of this positive test, we implemented the response plan. Our first step was to use our work scheduling tools to determine with whom the employee would have worked with in close proximity for a period of 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms. We also conducted phone interviews with the individual to ask additional questions regarding who else may have been exposed.

With this information, we quarantined those employees who had close proximity, defined by CDC guidelines, for 14 days. In addition to asking these employees to quarantine, we encouraged them to seek a test for COVID-19, to wear a mask at all times around others, and keep track of COVID-19 symptoms. We also informed these employees that they will be paid for this time under the CARES Act. We accomplished this within two hours.

Concurrently to quarantining those with close proximity, we had conversations with employees who may have been exposed but would not meet the definition of close proximity and those who were exposed to individuals who may have been exposed. These people are considered lower risk, but we continue to take all potential exposure seriously. We let them know they should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, stay out of work, and seek testing. We are fortunate our work is often outdoors, making it easier to physically distance.

Additionally, we had a company meeting to discuss this openly and to let everyone know that it is encouraged for all of us to self-monitor, contact our doctors or local health department for any COVID-19 symptoms, and asking anyone who exhibits any symptoms to stay out of work. We also revised our mask and face covering policy, making masks or face coverings required anytime we are around other people and employees have been made aware they will be sent home if they don't follow these guidelines.

We reached out to local health authorities to discuss the actions we took and coordinate with them to conduct testing on any employee at Riverbend who would like one. Riverbend is a large employer in an area made up of many small communities and we felt it in the best public interest to test as many people as possible at the nursery so we can nip this in the bud. Our intention is to continue working with local health officials to ensure that we do our part to contain COVID-19.

—Steve Ronyak, CEO