The following messages are important for you to ensure the long-term recovery of your business in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Protect your Employees

There are many ways to ensure that your employees are kept safe during the pandemic, and are able to return to work:

- Review your sick-leave policies. Does your policy encourage employees to be honest in reporting their symptoms? Does your policy allow for sick leave necessary for COVID-19 testing or quarantine? Does your policy require additional testing to return to work?
- Implement a health screening. A short, one-page screening form that includes a report of relevant symptoms and temperature is an effective method to ensure all employees are healthy each shift.
- These considerations are important to ensuring your staff stay home when they are sick, avoid spreading the infection throughout the workplace, and return to work after they've recovered. It is more effective if these processes are in place before an outbreak occurs. Employees should be notified of these policies.

Know the Process

The process for testing, symptom monitoring, isolation and contact tracing are multistep, with each step being an integral part of the process to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

- When an employee is sick, it is imperative that they stay home, and report symptoms to their healthcare provider or the COVID Information Line at 433-6947 as necessary. There are many different scenarios that may require that your employee stay home from work. These scenarios are explained in the chart on the back.

Know the Terminology

The Health Department uses specific terminology to refer to each of the parts of a COVID-19 case investigation. Here are several important definitions:

- **Exposure** - a person who was within 6 feet of a person with an active COVID-19 infection for 15 minutes or more
- **Self-quarantine** - a period of 14 days where an exposed or potentially infectious person stays home, away from others, in an effort to prevent the spread of disease. During this time, the individual should not be in contact with others. The Health Department oversees this process.
- **Isolation** - a period of time in which a person with an active COVID-19 infection does not have contact with others in an effort to prevent the spread of disease. During this period, the individual may not go to work. This process is overseen by the Health Department and a medical provider, when necessary.
- **Active case** - a person who is still infectious and in the isolation period required by the Health Department
- **Recovered case** - a person who has been released from isolation and is no longer infectious

The following questions are commonly asked by businesses related to COVID-19.

Can a person who is tested for COVID-19 come to work while they wait for results?

- Since a person who is tested for COVID-19 is potentially infectious, the person will be instructed to stay home while they await their results.

Will I be notified if my employee is being tested for COVID-19?

- Because of Federal law and patient privacy rights, the Health Department cannot discuss an individual's health record with their employer. However, all individuals who are tested are encouraged to contact their employer. At the request of the employee, the Health Department can provide documentation of requirements for quarantine or isolation, as well as successful completion of these, to the employee, who then may provide it to the employer.

What if my employee tests positive?

- If your employee tests positive and has potentially exposed other employees, the Health Department will work with the positive employee to identify close contacts. The Department would encourage the employee to work with the employer to obtain shift schedules and contact phone numbers. The Health Department may provide documentation of requirements for quarantine or isolation, as well as successful completion of these, to the employee, who then may provide it to the employer.
- Be aware that a significant number of exposures in the workplace may affect your capacity to carry out normal work activities. This highlights the importance of planning for COVID-19 related outages.

Can quarantined employees do alternative work activities?

- Yes, absolutely! As long as the employee does not have active symptoms, the employee can do a number of alternative activities that allow for work to be done while staying away from others. This may include cleaning and sanitizing work spaces, doing work in an isolated setting, working from home, or coming in to work after the business closes. A strict cleaning and sanitizing schedule should be in place.

*If you have other questions not listed in this section, please call
the COVID-19 Information line at 406-433-6947.*

COVID-19 Considerations for Businesses: Know the Process

1201 W Holly St #1,
Sidney, MT 59270
406-433-2207

The following section outlines the process for testing, symptom monitoring, isolation and contact tracing and how that may impact your employees. Each step is an integral part of the process to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Scenario	Length of Time	Method of Release
An employee is symptomatic and tested for COVID-19	The employee should stay home until test results are received.	If the test is negative, the employee should stay home until they feel well. If the test is positive, see below.
An employee tests positive for COVID-19	The employee must stay home in isolation. Health Department staff will conduct daily health checks. The isolation period could be extensive, depending on the severity of the symptoms.	The Health Officer will release the employee when release criteria are met. The employee is considered recovered and no longer infectious, and may return to work.
An employee is named as a contact to a positive case of COVID-19	The employee should stay home in quarantine. Health Department staff will conduct daily health checks. Symptoms may develop up to 14 days past exposure.	Health Department staff will release the employee after the 14-day period if no symptoms have developed.
An employee is a contact to a named contact to a positive case of COVID-19	Health Department staff will evaluate the potential contact. If there is no positive exposure, the employee will be asked to self-monitor their health for 14 days. The employee may go to work in most cases.	Health Department staff will release the employee after the 14-day period if no symptoms have developed.