



## **What is the definition of a COVID19 cluster?**

A COVID19 cluster is two (2) or more **confirmed** or **probable** cases of COVID19 that are linked by the same location of exposure (e.g., hospital, long-term care facility, grocery store, etc.) or exposure event (e.g., work party, vacation, etc.) that is **not a household exposure**.

## **How do I know when to attribute a positive or probable case to a facility or setting?**

Cases will be attributed to a facility or setting where the patient was located five (5) days prior to symptom onset date or specimen collection date (if asymptomatic).

Example #1: Patient A was located in long-term care facility A and then transported to an acute care hospital A. Four (4) days after admission to the acute care hospital the patient developed a fever and shortness of breath and tested positive for COVID-19. The patient would be a case for long-term care facility A.

Example #2: Patient B was a resident in long-term care facility B. Patient was transported to acute care hospital B and was asymptomatic. Six (6) days after admission to acute care hospital B, the patient tested positive for COVID-19. The patient would be a case for acute care hospital B.

## **When do I notify the cluster team of a cluster?**

The cluster team should be notified when there is a single case in the following facility types:

- Alcohol & Drug Facility
- DCS Facility
- Mental Health Facility
- Other Healthcare
- Assisted Care Living Facility
- Group Home
- Nursing Home
- Residential Home for the Aged
- Corrections
- Home Health Agency
- Other Cong. Setting

The cluster team should be notified of a confirmed cluster ( $\geq 2$  confirmed or probable cases that are not household exposures) according to the table below:

| Facility Type                        | When to Notify Cluster Team of Confirmed Cluster                   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Alcohol and Drug Facility            | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Assisted Care Living Facility (ACLF) | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Bar                                  | When ≥5 confirmed or probable cases are identified in staff*       |
| Community                            | When ≥5 confirmed or probable cases are identified*                |
| Construction/Building                | When ≥5 confirmed or probable cases are identified*                |
| Corrections                          | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Day Care                             | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| DCS Facility                         | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Educational Institution              | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Farm                                 | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| First Responders                     | When ≥5 confirmed or probable cases are identified*                |
| Food Processing/Packaging            | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Government                           | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Group Home                           | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Home Health Agency                   | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Hospital                             | When ≥2 more staff working on the same unit/floor are identified** |
| Industrial                           | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Mental Health Facility               | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Nursing Home                         | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Other Congregate Setting             | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Other Healthcare                     | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Outpatient Clinic                    | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Religious/Spiritual                  | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Residential Home for the Aged        | When ≥2 confirmed or probable cases are identified                 |
| Restaurant                           | When ≥5 confirmed or probable cases are identified in staff*       |

\*You may notify the cluster team sooner if you feel that (1) this cluster could attract media attention or (2) if you feel that the cluster could become a large cluster.

\*\*You do not have to notify the cluster team of patients in hospitals with positive COVID tests unless the patient came from a LTCF within the previous five (5) days. Hospitalized patients should not count in a hospital's cluster count unless it is believed that transmission occurred within the hospital.

### **What information should I provide when I notify the cluster team?**

Please provide the following information to the cluster team when notifying of a watch list (1 confirmed or probable case) or a confirmed cluster (≥2 confirmed or probable cases):

1. Facility or event name
2. Facility or event street address

3. Facility or event city
4. Facility or event county
5. Facility or event zip code
6. Number of confirmed cases in residents or non-staff
7. Number of confirmed cases in staff or employees
8. Number of deaths

If you are reporting a watch list or confirmed cluster in a long-term care facility (LTCF), please provide the following additional information:

1. Number of residents currently in the facility and in isolation
2. Number of residents currently in the facility and out of isolation (recovered)
3. Number of resident deaths

### **When can a cluster investigation be “closed”?**

A cluster investigation can be considered “closed” after two (2) incubation periods (28 days) have passed since the last exposure with no new cases identified within that period of time.

### **How do I request a cluster name be assigned in NBS?**

If you have a confirmed (≥2 more cases with positive lab results for COVID19) cluster, please email [COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov](mailto:COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov) to request a cluster ID.

### **How long will it take for the cluster name to appear in NBS after the request?**

It usually takes 1-2 days after a cluster is requested to available in NBS for association.

### **How do I associate a confirmed case with a cluster in NBS?**

In the investigation in NBS on the “Case Info” tab, cases may be associated with a cluster in the section below:

☐ **Epidemiologic**  
[Collapse Subsections](#)  
 ☐ **Epi-Link**

Is this case part of an outbreak?:  ▼  
 Outbreak Name:  ▼

Once you select “Yes” for the question “Is this case part of an outbreak” there will be a drop-down list of clusters that have been added to NBS.

### **What if I need assistance associating cases with a cluster in NBS?**

If you need assistance with associating cases with a cluster (especially those investigations that may have already been entered and closed), please email [COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov](mailto:COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov) with a list of NBS patient IDs and the clusters those cases are associated with and we can assist.

### **How often should I “follow-up” on a cluster?**

We recommend that you touch base with the facility/follow-up on the cluster at least three (3) times per week. If the cluster is in a healthcare facility, long-term care facility, or other congregate setting, more frequent follow-up may be needed to identify activities that the facility may be taking to reduce transmission within the facility.

Cluster lists will be sent to regional cluster points-of-contact every Monday. Cluster updates are due back to your central office cluster point-of-contact by **COB every Thursday**. LTFCs with clusters will appear on the TDH website every Friday.

### **What if assistance/education is needed regarding infection control practices at a facility?**

If assistance is needed at a facility regarding infection control practices, please email [COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov](mailto:COVID19.Cluster@tn.gov) and [HAI.Health@tn.gov](mailto:HAI.Health@tn.gov). Someone from the Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) team will reach out to you.