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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**DART proactively tests employees for COVID-19**  
***95% of employees tested negative***

As part of its commitment to employee and rider health and safety, the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) tested its staff for COVID-19 on Tuesday, May 12. The testing, hosted at a mobile testing site in DART's bus garage and maintenance facility, was conducted as a proactive safety measure and was not mandated by state officials.

A total of 187 employees were tested on Tuesday with 95% (178 employees) testing negative and 5% (9 employees) testing positive. The table below outlines, by department, number of employees who tested positive and negative.

<b>Results from May 12 Employee COVID-19 Testing</b>	
	<b>Positive Tests</b>
<b>Department</b>	
Fixed Route	6
Paratransit	1
Maintenance	2
Administration	0

From the very beginning of the outbreak DART committed to being fully transparent and doing all it could to ensure the essential service of public transit continued in the safest manner possible.

"Research continues to indicate a high percentage of people can be asymptomatic," explained DART CEO Elizabeth Presutti. "Clearly it was in the best interest of our employees and riders to test all staff continuing to report for work, identify anyone who is positive, and have them quarantined at home with full pay. While we would prefer zero positive cases, we believe a 5% infection rate indicates the mitigation efforts we have put in place are working."

Most of the employees who tested positive were not reporting symptoms. Two of the employees who tested positive were sent home earlier in the week when they did not pass the on-site wellness screening all employees are required to complete each day before reporting to work.

We support and appreciate the investment DART is making in our safety," said ATU Union Rep and DART Fixed Route Operator John Rugama. "It's critical we work together to keep ourselves and our riders safe while providing essential transportation."

Prior to Tuesday's employee testing, DART had seven employees test negative and four employees test positive for coronavirus, three maintenance employees and one fixed route operator. Those cases are not reflected in the above numbers. DART is updating its website at [ridedart.com/covidemployeeimpact](http://ridedart.com/covidemployeeimpact) anytime an employee tests positive or negative for COVID-19.

DART is asking all employees and riders to remain vigilant in the steps they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including remaining six feet apart, regular hand washing and wearing masks or face coverings on the bus and at DART Central Station.

Until further notice, DART will continue the preventative measures it has put in place to keep riders and employees safe. Some of these measures include:

- Requiring employees to complete a wellbeing check before work each day, which includes a temperature check.
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing of all DART vehicles, and common spaces of DART's facilities.
- Suspending fares and asking riders who can to get on and off buses using the back doors.
- Providing employees with protective materials, including sanitizer, gloves and masks.
- Recommending that all riders wear masks when on board a DART bus or when waiting for a bus at DART Central Station or at a bus stop with other riders.
- Limiting the number of people inside DART Central Station.
- Asking riders to only use DART for essential trips.
- Using extra buses during peak travel times to ensure riders can keep their distance from each other while on the bus.
- Asking riders and employees to practice safe social distancing whenever possible.

A full list of the preventative measures and temporary service changes DART has made as it continues to deal with COVID-19 can be found on our [website](#).

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Photo 1: DART employee checks in with DART Safety Manager to be tested for COVID-19.



Photo 2: DART employees queue up to participate in drive through COVID-19 testing.

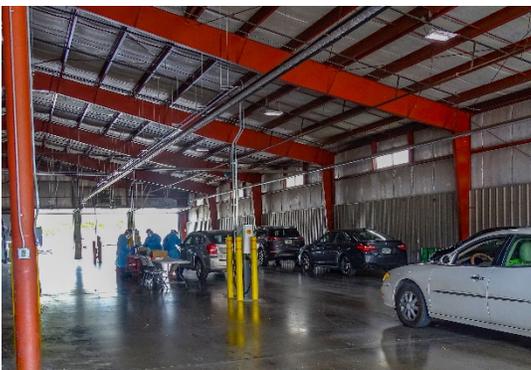


Photo 3: DART employees drive through the Paratransit barn to be tested for COVID-19.



Photo 4: DART employee participates in drive through testing for COVID-19.

Full sized photos can be downloaded [here](#).