

Ford temporarily closed factory after two COVID-19 cases

20 May 2020



Ford said it has sanitized work stations at its Chicago plants after two workers contracted COVID-19

Ford was forced to temporarily close an auto manufacturing plant in Chicago after two workers tested positive for coronavirus, the company told AFP on Wednesday.

The incident on Tuesday highlights the difficulties facing US automakers, which restarted up production on Monday after shutting down in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"When two employees who returned to work this week tested positive for COVID-19, we immediately notified people known to have been in close contact with the infected individuals and asked them to self-quarantine for 14 days," a Ford spokeswoman said.

"Due to incubation time, we know these employees did not contract COVID-19 while at work," the spokeswoman said.

She said "the work area, equipment, team area and the path that the team member took" have been disinfected and the plant had resumed

operations by Tuesday night.

The employees worked in an area about a mile away from the main plant, where the Ford Explorer and Interceptor and the Lincoln Aviator are manufactured.

United Auto Workers spokesman Brian Rothenberg said an entire section of the plant employing 5,800 people was closed, with most workers evacuated.

"The protocols are being followed to the 'T,'" he said.

Union officials and experts had been concerned about reopening [auto plants](#) while the virus remained rife, pointing to difficulties in maintaining social distancing on assembly lines where employees work side by side and in cramped quarters.

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APA citation: Ford temporarily closed factory after two COVID-19 cases (2020, May 20) retrieved 24 January 2022 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-05-ford-temporarily-factory-covid-cases.html>

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