

SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

January 2021

Updated CDC Recommendations for COVID-19 Exposure and Return to Work

On December 10, 2020, the CDC provided updated recommendations for individuals who need to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19. The following information is a summary of the updated recommendations; However, the entire text can be found on the CDC Website, at the following links:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/communication-plan.html>

Recommended CDC COVID-19 Communication Plan for Select Non-Healthcare Critical Infrastructure Employers:

Return-to-work messages for employees with COVID-19

- If you had symptoms of COVID-19, you can [end your home isolation](#) and return to work when:
 - At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
 - However, you may need to wait up to 20 days if you had a severe case of COVID-19 or if you are immunocompromised. Talk with a healthcare provider to decide how long you need to wait.
 - AND at least 24 hours have passed since you last had a fever without using fever-reducing medication.
 - AND your other symptoms have improved – for example, your cough or shortness of breath has improved.
- If you never had any symptoms and are not immunocompromised, you can [end your home isolation](#) and return to work when at least 10 days have passed after the date you first tested positive for COVID-19.

Who needs to quarantine?

- People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past three months.

What counts as “close contact?”

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more throughout the day, OR
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19, OR
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them), OR
- You shared eating or drinking utensils, OR
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

What steps should be taken?

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
 - Employees may work from home if it is possible to do so.
 - Employees do not need to be tested to return to work, as long as they remain asymptomatic for 14 days.

- Watch for fever (100.4), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

Options to reduce quarantine:

Reducing the length of quarantine may make it easier for people to quarantine by reducing the time they cannot work. A shorter quarantine period also can lessen stress on the public health system, especially when new infections are rapidly rising.

Your local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last, based on local conditions and needs. Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if you need to quarantine.

Options they will consider include stopping quarantine:

- After day 10 without testing as long as individuals remain asymptomatic.
- After day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later).

After stopping quarantine, you should

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to [prevent the spread of COVID-19](#).

CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days and recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus. It is recommended that an employee who has been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID-19, be tested before returning to work.

CDC will continue to evaluate new information and update recommendations as needed.

Please contact the Safety Director's office with any questions.