

Return to Work Guidance for Businesses

July 27, 2020

This document is designed to help businesses and employers safely allow employees to return to work following a positive test for COVID-19, following self-imposed quarantine after being exposed to someone with the virus, or after experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

What should a business do when an employee tests positive (or is suspected of having) for COVID-19?

- The employee should stay home and away from others until they have fully recovered (see below for return to work criteria).
- Other employees who had close contact* should stay home for 14 days and monitor for symptoms
- The employee's workspace should be thoroughly cleaned.
- All employees should monitor their health for symptoms, not come to work if they develop any symptoms, and consult their doctor.

*A close contact is a person who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting two days before symptom onset or two days before test collection date if asymptomatic until the case isolated.

When can an employee return to the workplace?

Symptoms: An employee can be allowed to return to work when the following criteria are met:

- fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours, and
- improvement in other symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and
- at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Positive Test Result but no symptoms: If the employee with the confirmed case of COVID-19 is asymptomatic, they can return to work after at least 10 days have passed since the collection date of the first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test as long as they remain asymptomatic.

What are the recommendations for employees who had close contact to the case? An employee who is not working remotely should stay home for 14 days after the last known close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The employee should self-monitor for symptoms associated with COVID-19.

What should a business or employer do to promote and maintain a safe workplace?

Symptom and Temperature Checks: Measure each employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should occur before entering the facility.

Face Coverings/Masks: Issue face masks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings, provide hand sanitizer and promote good hand washing practices.

Social Distancing: Modify the workplace as needed to allow at least six feet of space between employees. Common areas such as conference rooms and break rooms should be closed.

Cleaning: Increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces in their facility(s). This includes workstations, countertops and doorknobs.

Stay Home When Ill: Implement policies that require all employees who are still working to monitor their health and stay home if they get sick.