



Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace

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Reducing the spread

Effective strategies for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace include:

- Physical distancing (separation of all employees, customers, visitors by at least 6 feet).
- Promotion of frequent hand washing.
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces (i.e. door handles).
- Ensuring HVAC systems are in good working order, and ventilation has been increased, where possible.



- Establishing sick leave policies that allow employees to stay home when ill and to stay home to care for sick household members. Make sure that employees are aware of these policies.
- Self-screening for symptoms before employees enter the workspace. Scan the code to learn more.
- Symptomatic individuals should consult with their health care provider regarding any potential need for COVID-19 testing.



When you have a COVID-19 positive employee in the workplace

Once a COVID-19 case (a person with a positive PCR or antigen laboratory result, regardless of symptoms) is identified among employees, the employer should:

- Make sure that the COVID-19 positive employee is sent home and stays home in isolation.
- Identify all close contacts¹ associated with the workplace (both employees and non-employees) who had exposure to the case during the infectious period. A case is typically considered to be infectious from 48 hours before symptoms first appeared (or date of first positive laboratory test for people without symptoms) until the time the case is sent home to get isolated.
- Any contact who is symptomatic should immediately be sent home to self-isolate.
- All asymptomatic close contacts are required to self-quarantine for 14 days from the last date of their exposure regardless if the contact tests negative during the quarantine period or not. Staff instructed to self-isolate or self-quarantine who cannot work remotely should be given consideration for paid sick leave.

¹ A close contact is any individual within the workplace who was within 6 feet of the case for more than 15 minutes or had contact with the case's body fluids and/or secretions, for example, being coughed or sneezed on, sharing of a drink or food utensils.

Returning to work

Testing is not needed for individuals to return to work. Return to work is based on the following three criteria:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved. Because loss of taste and smell can continue for weeks or months after recovery, these symptoms should not extend isolation.

For cases of COVID-19 who were never symptomatic, they should be allowed to return to work after at least 10 days have passed since the date of their positive lab test.

Close contacts to cases of COVID-19 should be allowed to return to work after 14 days have passed from their last date of exposure to the case as long as they have remained symptom free.

