

# Guidance on Suspected COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace

Begin here for a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in the workplace.

**Is the individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, which include:**

- Fever (over 100.4°F or 38°C)
- Chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**Or a positive COVID-19 diagnosis with or without symptoms**

**YES**

**NO**

Was the individual in the facility (or other work related activity) at the time he/she notified employer of symptoms/diagnosis?

**YES**

**NO**

**YES**

Has the individual been in close contact (see note on this page) with any symptomatic or positively diagnosed COVID-19 cases in the past 14 days (i.e. exposed to a confirmed or likely positive COVID-19 individual)?

NOTE: If employee is residing with a positive (or likely positive) COVID-19 individual, the relevant exposure period (see below) begins on the day that the household member has satisfied the COVID-19 symptom or test-based protocol (see Page 2).

1. Send the individual home and advise to seek medical care as necessary.
2. Decide to deep clean or temporarily facility closure.
3. Conduct contact tracing, identify all individuals in close contact with this person (see note on this page).
4. Anyone in close contact should self-quarantine (see Exposure Self Quarantine Protocol on this page).

Advise the individual to care for themselves at home, monitor symptoms, and seek medical care if necessary.

Self-quarantine (see Exposure Self Quarantine Protocol note on this page) and seek medical care as necessary

Was the individual in the facility within the past 7 days?

**NO**

Has the individual been in the facility (or other work related activity) within the past 14 days

**NO**

**NO**

See return to work tool on page 2 for next steps

Continue to follow safety protocols, practice social distancing, and good hygiene. Wear a face covering.

**YES**

**YES**

**Employers may either:**

- Close the facility based on CDC guidance **OR**
- Have the facility (or affected area) professionally deep-cleaned but not before 24-hours after COVID-19 presence in the facility

Conduct contact tracing, identify all individuals in close contact (see note on this page) with this person

**Exposure Self Quarantine Protocol**  
Employers may require exposed employee to quarantine for:

- 14 days and seek medical care as necessary (14-days remains the CDC preferred approach) **OR**
- 10 days (no test) **OR**
- 7 days after negative test on day 5 or later

NOTE: Exposed individuals who are fully vaccinated and/or have tested positive for COVID-19 within the 3 months prior to exposure and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.

**GUIDANCE IS RAPIDLY CHANGING. PLEASE MONITOR THE CDC.** The information contained in this tool is based upon current CDC guidance and is subject to change. For the most up to date information, please visit the [CDC-COVID-19 Website](https://www.cdc.gov/covid-19/).

**Close Contact:**

- Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or got respiratory droplets on you

# Returning to the Office Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case

Begin here for returning to the office following a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.

**For individuals experiencing symptoms with or without a positive diagnosis (Symptom Based Protocol):**

- At least 10 days\* have passed since symptom onset positive diagnosis, AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
- Other symptoms have improved (changed from “improvement in respiratory symptoms” to “improvement in symptoms” to address expanding list of symptoms associated with COVID-19).

**For individuals with a positive diagnosis without symptoms (Test Based Protocol):**

- 10 days have passed since the date the individual was tested by a healthcare professional and he/she has not experienced any symptoms.

YES

NO

The individual may discontinue isolation and return to work

**Continue to stay at home and seek medical care as needed.**

**NOTE\*** A limited number of persons with severe illness may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days, that may warrant extending duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset. The CDC recommends that the individual consider consultation with infection control experts.

**EXPOSURE:** CDC continues to recommend 14 days of quarantine for exposed individuals — after exposure — based on the time it takes to develop illness if infected. Thus, it is possible that a person known to be infected could leave isolation earlier than a person who is quarantined because of the possibility they are infected.

**MEDICAL INQUIRIES:** The employer may only ask an employee about his/her medical/COVID symptoms, diagnosis, and/or exposure if the employee is coming into the facility and/or attending other work related meetings/events. Employers generally may not ask COVID-19 medical questions of employees who are solely working remotely/from home.

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