



COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Critical Infrastructure

Updated October 19, 2021

Introduction

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is dedicated to providing COVID-19 support and information to workplaces. Our role during the pandemic is to work together with businesses around the city to stay informed about the status of the pandemic. Communication and cooperation with public health officials is very important. The more public health officials understand about your operation, the more they will be able to help you design solutions and find the option that will be least disruptive.

This guide offers employers in non-healthcare settings resources on what to do in the event of COVID-19 cases in the workplace, and how to mitigate spread. COVID-19 can spread within workplaces and, depending on the type of business, to customers. It is critical that businesses provide employees with clear COVID-19 guidance to protect their health, prevent transmission to others, and minimize disruptions to daily operations within the workplace.

We have included information regarding reporting cases of COVID-19, protocols on worker testing, and when a worker can return to work. Additional guidance is included on safety protocols, worker education, and communication. Some workplaces may have specific industry guidance beyond what is noted in this document, including food processing, healthcare, or educational institutions. Please refer to any available industry specific guidance in addition to this document.

For additional information or if you have questions, please contact the CDPH COVID-19 Workplace Team at workplaceCOVID@cityofchicago.org.

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Reporting Cases of COVID-19

If 2 or more cases are reported in the workplace over 14 days, an employer should report those cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health. City-licensed businesses are required to report if they have 5 or more cases within 14 days or if their business is closed due to COVID-19 cases. Cases can be reported using our [Online Case Report Form](#). This may indicate a cluster of cases or outbreak that requires additional follow up.

For questions about reporting a worker with COVID-19, please refer to [Public Health Order 2020-2](#) and the Illinois Communicable Disease Code, [specifically Section 690.200](#) and Emergency Amendment [Section 690.50](#).

It is important to make every effort to protect a worker's private health information, even in smaller work environments. CDPH will work with you to help submit case information confidentially. **Please do not report protected health information to CDPH through email, unless you have the ability to send encrypted email.**

What to Expect from CDPH When Reporting:

Workplace Assessment Survey

Once you report to CDPH, the COVID-19 Workplace Team will follow up to do a workplace assessment reviewing your organizations' COVID-19 policies and best practices. We will also review the positive cases you have reported. **There are no punitive repercussions to this conversation (you will not be fined or have your business license revoked).** The questions we ask are routine and serve the purpose of gathering as much information as possible about cases in your workplace and providing guidance on how to make your work environment as safe as possible. The questions we ask highlight:

- Background information about your business and workforce
- Social distancing in the workplace
- Promoting personal hygiene
- Identifying and excluding ill workers
- Education, Training, and Communication
- Cleaning/Sanitation/Disinfection
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings
- Evaluation and Maintenance of Ventilation System

COVID-19 Workplace Report

After reporting COVID-19 cases at your workplace, you will receive an automatic email response from the COVID-19 Workplace Team with a fillable form. It is requested that you submit this report with all cases of COVID-19 in your workplace.

Much like the workplace assessment, there are no punitive repercussions to reporting these cases. This report is only used by CDPH to inform us about COVID-19 clusters/outbreaks, to provide you specific guidance for your business, and to help public health officials understand trends in the pandemic and how COVID-19 is affecting our community. Some of the details we will ask you to provide in this document include:

- Demographic information for positive COVID-19 cases including: name, DOB, sex, race/ethnicity, phone number, home address
- The role/location of positive individuals in your facility including: job title, shift, department
- Information regarding a positive case's illness including: date of first symptom, test date, test result, date facility was notified of illness, date facility notified CDPH, last date worked

Laws Governing Reporting

[Public Health Order No. 2020-2 \(amended 10/1/20\):](#)

SECTION 4. Except as otherwise provided in Section 3 of this Order, any business or establishment licensed or required to be licensed under Title 4 of the Municipal Code of Chicago shall immediately report the following to CDPH: (1) any suspension in operations due to COVID-19 cases among employees or patrons; or (2) any instance in which the business learns that five or more employees or patrons have tested positive for COVID-19 occurring within 14 calendar days of each other. The requirements of this Section shall be reported via a mechanism to be detailed and described on the [CDPH website](#).

Businesses that are licensed by the City's department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection are required to report to CDPH if there is an outbreak or if they have closed due to cases of COVID-19. All businesses regardless of licensure are strongly encouraged to report to us if they have 2 or more employees test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days.

If CDPH learns about cases in your workplace through routine investigations, contact tracing or complaints, the [Illinois Communicable Disease Code](#) mandates that you cooperate with a public health investigation:

Pursuant to Section 690.30(a), the Department and local health authorities may investigate the occurrence of cases, suspect cases or carriers of COVID-19 in a public or private place for the purposes of verifying the existence of the disease, locating and evaluating contacts of cases, identifying those at risk of disease, and determining necessary control measures. Such investigations may include entering a place of employment for purposes of conducting

investigations of those conditions within the place of employment that are relevant, pertinent and necessary to the investigation. When two or more suspected cases of COVID-19 occur in any business, organization, institution, facility, school or daycare the business owner, or the person in charge of the establishment shall cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases, suspect cases, outbreaks and suspect outbreaks.

A public health investigation typically entails filling out a survey (as described above) about practices to prevent COVID-19 spread and providing details on employees' exposures.

Contact Tracing in the Workplace

If a worker tests positive in the workplace, co-workers that may have come in to contact with the infected individual should be informed of potential exposure, while maintaining the employee's confidentiality.

Basic Guidelines for Employer Contract Tracing

Workplace contact tracing is a narrower version of the contact tracing that public health officials are conducting to contain the spread of COVID-19.

- **Risk of Exposure (6-15-48).** CDC has determined that COVID-19 exposure risk begins when someone is within **6 feet** of an infected person for **15 minutes** or more over the course of a day. Someone with COVID-19 may be infectious within **the 48 hours before symptom onset or positive COVID-19 test (if asymptomatic)**. This is why quarantine of exposed people is so important to preventing spread.
- **Identify and Notify.** If one or more workers is diagnosed with COVID-19, a business should act quickly to identify and notify any co-workers or patrons who might have been exposed during the infectious period. Additionally, general notifications to the entire staff should be issued to inform them of potential exposure.
- **Precautionary Steps.** Businesses should advise any worker who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Any close contact who is not vaccinated should quarantine and self-monitor for **14 days** from last exposure. However, if a business is considered essential, *as a last resort and in limited circumstances*, CDC guidelines say exposed workers can continue to work onsite as long as they have no symptoms while taking the following actions prior to and during their work shift:
 - **Pre-Screen:** Employers should consider measuring the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. If possible, temperature checks should be conducted before the individual physically enters the facility.
 - **Wear a mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue face masks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
 - **Social distancing:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

- **Clean and disinfect workspaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment (keyboards, phones, touch screens) routinely.
- **Regular monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a fever or other symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Actions Following Symptom Development or a Positive Test.** Workers who develop symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, should be evaluated for infection and promptly isolate themselves for at least **10 days** since their symptoms first appear (or for asymptomatic individuals, from their test date) and for at least **24 hours** without fever (without using fever-reducing medications). For additional information, workers can be referred to CDPH guidance on [What to Do if You're Sick](#).
- **Reporting to CDPH.** Under [Public Health Order No. 2020-2](#), healthcare facilities and congregate facilities, including schools, jails, correctional facilities, adult transition centers (halfway houses), children's services facilities, child care institutions, adult family care centers, assisted living establishments, long term care facilities, adult family care homes and all community living facilities must report to CDPH clusters of 2 or more cases of COVID-19 occurring within 14 calendar days of each other within 24 hours of identifying the cluster.

Any business or establishment licensed or required to be licensed under Title 4 of the Municipal Code of Chicago shall immediately report the following to CDPH: **(1) any suspension in operations due to COVID-19 cases among employees or patrons; or (2) any instance in which the business learns that five or more employees or patrons have tested positive for COVID-19 occurring within 14 calendar days of each other.**

Per the Illinois Communicable Disease code, these facilities must cooperate with a public health investigation.

To protect an individual's privacy, workers should only be informed that they may have been exposed to a case. They should not be told the identity of the individual(s) who they may have been exposed to.

Recommended Best Practices for Contact Tracing

In order to ensure effective contact tracing, CDPH recommends considering the following:

- Maintaining attendance records, including workers' scheduled shifts
- For indoor office environments, maintaining a current floor plan or seating chart
- For job sites, documenting all workers, vendors, subcontractors and visitors who enter the site, and collecting contact information
- Keeping track of workers assigned to specific work areas or groups of workers who work together on a specific task or are otherwise working in close contact (within 6 feet) for a prolonged period of time (more than 15 minutes)

COVID-19 Testing

Provide testing information to workers including who should get tested, when they should get tested, and where they can get tested.

In some cases, CDPH may have the ability to help your business with testing resources. Please email workplaceCOVID@cityofchicago.org for more information.

For testing location information, please refer workers to the following links:

- [Testing locations in the city of Chicago](#)
- [Testing Locations in the state of Illinois](#)



Return to Work Guidance

Workers Exposed to COVID-19

Workers who were in close contact with a person suspected or confirmed for COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days and monitor COVID-19 symptoms.

On **December 2, 2020**, CDC issued a revised recommendation for workers in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. This guidance applies to **quarantine of individuals with exposure to someone who has been diagnosed** with COVID-19. *It does not alter existing isolation recommendations for **individuals diagnosed with COVID-19** themselves.*

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and asymptomatic:

It is recommended that people who are not fully vaccinated quarantine and get tested immediately after being identified, and, if negative, tested again in 5-7 days after last exposure or immediately if symptoms develop during quarantine.

There are two additional options for how long quarantine should last, depending on local availability of viral testing:

- **OPTION 1:** If an individual has no symptoms and receives a negative PCR or antigen test result at least 5 days after last contact, they can discontinue quarantine **after 7 days**
- **OPTION 2:** Quarantine can be discontinued **after 10 days** (from last close contact) if an individual remains asymptomatic without a negative viral test.

See [page 8](#) for quarantine and testing guidance on fully vaccinated individuals.

A test-based return to work policy is no longer recommended as workers can continue to test positive despite no longer being infectious.

For workplaces to adopt these new guidelines, they must be able to:

- Track testing results for individuals who were tested to ensure they meet criteria to end quarantine.
- Ensure individuals continue to monitor symptoms for 14 days and immediately send workers home if symptoms develop, even if they are fully vaccinated.

After quarantining, workers should:

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If they develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate, contact their healthcare provider, and get tested with a molecular or antigen-based test (e.g., a nose or mouth swab).
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Interim Testing and Quarantine Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People

Effective October 19, 2021, **fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 should get tested 5-7 days following the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.** If they test positive, they should isolate as described at the bottom of this page.

Fully vaccinated people who live in a household with someone who is immunosuppressed, at increased risk of severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children <12 years of age) may also consider masking at home for 14 days following a known exposure or until they receive a negative test result.

Most fully vaccinated people who are a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case are not required to quarantine if they follow the above criteria. Those who are not required to quarantine should monitor their health for 14 days after exposure.

Persons who do not meet all of the above criteria are required to quarantine after exposure as outlined on [page 7](#).

Workers Who Test Positive for COVID-19

Workers who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home for at least 10 days after symptoms first appear and be symptom-free for at least 24 hours, including fever free without use of medicine.

- If the worker tests positive but does not have symptoms, they should stay home for 10 days following the first positive test.

- Workers should not be required to show negative tests to return to work.
- If a letter for work is required, workers can get a work excuse note from their doctor. The Chicago Department of Public Health can provide a work excuse note for COVID-19 cases and their close contacts if they are Chicago residents.
- Encourage workers to communicate and cooperate with contact tracers when called. If they receive a call from 312-74-COVID (312-742-6843), they should provide the contact tracer with as much information as possible. Their names will not be shared with any other agencies, such as law enforcement or immigration, or with any of their contacts. This is an important strategy for minimizing the spread of the virus.

Anti-Retaliation Ordinance

[The Anti-Retaliation Ordinance](#) prohibits employers from retaliating against employees for obeying an order issued by the Mayor, Governor, Chicago Department of Public Health, or healthcare provider having to do with COVID-19 (such as necessary quarantine or isolation measures). Employers are also prohibited from taking any adverse action against an employee for caring for someone who has been issued certain orders having to do with COVID-19.

Paid Sick Leave

The [Paid Sick Leave ordinance](#) mandates that all Chicago businesses provide paid sick leave to employees. Any employee who works at least 80 hours for an employer in Chicago within any 120-day period is covered by the ordinance and is eligible for paid sick leave. Employees begin to accrue paid sick leave on the first calendar day after they begin their employment. For every 40 hours worked, employees accrue one hour of paid sick leave.

Chicago's [Vaccine Anti-Retaliation Ordinance](#) is an extension of the Paid Sick Leave ordinance and prohibits employers from retaliating against workers for taking time off to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Employers must allow workers to use paid sick leave or paid time off to get the vaccine and employers requiring vaccine must compensate workers for time taken to get the vaccine during work hours.

Creating Workplace Policies

CDPH recommends that all workplaces create a COVID-19 safety plan. If you have not already done so, below is some basic guidance on creating a COVID-19 safety plan in the workplace.

Topics include:

- Information Access for Workers
- Social Distancing
- Personal Hygiene Guidelines for Workers
- Cleaning and Sanitation Standards
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Environmental Air Quality and Ventilation

Information Access for Workers

Employers should provide educational tools and trainings to help prevent spread of COVID-19.

- Meetings and trainings regarding COVID-19 should be conducted in the workers' preferred language(s).
- COVID-19 training should be conducted to educate workers on COVID-19 best practices including symptoms of COVID-19, workplace exposure risks, reminding workers not to touch their mouth, nose, and eyes, and proper hand hygiene.

Signs should be placed throughout the facility reminding workers to stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, use hand hygiene, and to promote socially distancing. When possible, signs should be translated for workplaces with non-English speakers.

Social Distancing

Employers should configure the work environment to ensure workers are able to maintain social distance of 6 feet or more. This should include workstations, breakrooms, clock-in/out stations, restrooms, locker rooms (if applicable), conference rooms (if applicable), and common areas. Additional strategies to ensure social distancing in the workplace could include:

- Use visual cues, such as floor markings and signs, to promote distancing of 6 ft or more among individuals.
- Identify alternative break areas for workers if needed.
- Stagger shift start/end time and breaks.

Personal Hygiene for Workers

Employers should reinforce best practices for worker hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Practicing good hand hygiene, which includes the use of alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer) or handwashing, is a simple yet effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens and infections.

- Provide multiple hand washing and sanitizer stations in multiple locations that are easily accessible to workers.
- Reinforce proper hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette for workers in trainings and through signs.
- Increase the number of opportunities for workers to practice personal hygiene.

Cleaning and Sanitization Standards

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of a COVID-19 safety plan. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be killed if you use the right products. [EPA has compiled a list of disinfectant products that can be used against COVID-19](#), including ready-to-use sprays, concentrates, and wipes. Each product has been shown to be effective against viruses that are harder to kill than viruses like the one that causes COVID-19.



Cleaning and sanitization procedures should be implemented to ensure a safe workplace and prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Business owners should follow requirements in **mandatory OSHA standards** [29 CFR 1910.1200](#) and [1910.132](#), [133](#), and [138](#) for hazard communication and PPE appropriate for exposure to cleaning chemicals. In addition, CDC updated their [cleaning and disinfecting guidance](#) (specifically when someone is ill or has been diagnosed with COVID-19) on April 5, 2021.

- **If less than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space.
- **If more than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough. You may choose to also disinfect depending on [certain conditions](#) or everyday practices required by your facility.
- **If more than 3 days have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is necessary.

Personal Protective Equipment

All workers must have access to and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as recommended by CDC.

- Employers must provide workers with face coverings or surgical masks, unless their work task requires a respirator or other PPE.
- Workers should wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth to contain the wearer's respiratory droplets and help protect others and potentially themselves.
- Face coverings should be provided at no cost and replaced as needed or at the start of each shift. Coverings should be made of at least two layers of a tightly woven breathable fabric, such as cotton, and should not have exhalation valves or vents.
- Workers can be allowed to wear their own PPE as long as it meets the [standards outlined by CDC](#).

Updated Guidance on Face Coverings

Effective August 20, 2021, **CDPH reinstituted a [mask mandate](#) for all indoor public settings regardless of vaccination status.** This mandate applies to settings such as bars, restaurants, gyms, and common areas of condos and multi-residential buildings. Please note the following details:

- Employees in settings that are not open to the public may remove their face coverings if they remain static and at least a 6-foot distance apart from all other individuals.
- Patrons may remove face coverings when actively eating and drinking at bars and restaurants.
- Face coverings may also be removed for services that require their removal, such as beard shaves or facials.
- Masking is optional in outdoor settings. However, it is recommended for unvaccinated individuals in crowded outdoor settings.

Environmental Air Quality and Ventilation

Proper ventilation helps prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Business owners should consult with an HVAC engineer to ensure adequate ventilation and sanitation of air filters. Additional steps to ensure proper air quality in the workplace include:

- Ensuring the HVAC system(s) is operating in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and design specifications
- Conducting all regularly scheduled inspections and maintenance procedures
- Maximizing the amount of outside air supplied
- Installing air filters with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 13 or higher where feasible
- Maximizing natural ventilation in buildings without HVAC systems by opening windows or doors, when conditions allow (if that does not pose a safety risk)
- Considering the use of portable air cleaners with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters in spaces with high occupancy or limited ventilation
- Removing personal cooling fans from shared workspaces to minimize blowing of air from one person to another

COVID-19 Vaccine Phases and Planning

Vaccination in Chicago

The city of Chicago entered phase 2 of the vaccine rollout on April 19, 2021. **All Chicago residents aged 12+ are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.**

Employers are encouraged to host onsite vaccination clinics for their employees and their families. A list of possible providers can be found on the [Employer page](#) of the CDPH vaccine website. Employers can encourage workers to visit <http://www.chicago.gov/vaccinefinder> or call 312-746-4835 to find a COVID-19 vaccine provider. There are many options for appointments, including: health care providers, pharmacies, city-run sites, and [statewide sites](#). Appointments at city-run sites can be found on www.zocdoc.com/vaccine and a calendar of

Chicago vaccine events can be found on the [CDPH website](#). CDC also provides [guidance](#) for how employers can prepare for vaccination either at the workplace or in the community.

Vaccination in Workplaces

On May 28, 2021, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated their [technical assistance](#) related to the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing questions regarding vaccination and workplaces. Per the new guidance:

- Federal EEO laws do not prevent employers from requiring employees who physically enter a workplace to be vaccinated for COVID-19, provided they also comply with other applicable regulations including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.
- Federal EEO laws do not prohibit employers from offering incentives for employees to get vaccinated or voluntarily disclose documentation of vaccination provided the incentives are not so large as to be considered coercive.
- Information about an employee's COVID-19 vaccination is considered confidential medical information, so it must be kept confidential and stored per ADA requirements.

Specific questions regarding vaccine mandates and exemptions should be referred to your legal counsel.

Resources

For COVID-19 updates, data and resources, visit www.chicago.gov/coronavirus.

Cases of COVID-19

[What to do when a confirmed COVID-19 has been in your facility](#)
[CDC Guidance on When to Quarantine](#)
[Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings](#)
[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)
[Chicago's Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Sick Leave Resources](#)
[COVID-19 Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

[COVID-19 Vaccine Resources for Employers](#)
[City of Chicago COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#)
[COVID-19 Vaccine Finder](#)
[COVID-19 Vaccine Basics](#)

Contact Tracing

[Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Non-healthcare Workplaces: Information for Employers](#)

COVID-19 Testing

[Testing locations in the city of Chicago](#)
[Testing Locations in the state of Illinois](#)

Guidance for Creating and Updating a COVID-19 Safety Plan

[CDC Business Guidance](#)
[CDC Business FAQs](#)
[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Administration Guide to the Control and Prevention of COVID-19](#)
[CDC Guidelines on Social Distancing](#)
[List of EPA-Approved Disinfectants](#)
[CDC guidance on the use of masks to help slow the spread of COVID-19](#)
[When to Wear Gloves](#)
[Environmental Protection Agency's Guide to Ventilation and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
[ASHRAE \(American Society for Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers\)](#)
[COVID-19 Resources](#)

Industry Specific COVID-19 Resources

[OSHA Industry Specific Resources](#)

Restaurants/Bars

[CDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#)
[IDPH COVID-19 Food Establishment Guidance](#)
[Illinois Restaurant Association COVID-19 Guidance](#)
[National Restaurant Association COVID-19 Guidance](#)
[CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#)
[FDA Food Safety and the Coronavirus](#)

Factory/Manufacturing

[CDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Manufacturing](#)
[Illinois Manufacturers COVID-19 Guidance](#)
[National Association of Manufacturers COVID-19 Guidance](#)
[CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Manufacturing Workers and Employers](#)

Food Production (Non-Meat)

[CDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Manufacturing](#)
[IDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Food Production](#)
[FDA COVID-19 Guidance for Food Production](#)

Meat/Poultry Processing

[CDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Manufacturing](#)
[IDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Meat/Poultry Processing](#)
[CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Meat/Poultry Processing](#)

[American Association of Meat Processors COVID-19 Resources](#)

Construction

[Association of General Contractors COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Construction Workers](#)

Retail

[CDPH COVID-19 Guidance for Retail](#)

[National Retail Federation COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[Retail Industry Leaders Association COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Guidance for Employees

Using Chi COVID Coach

The [Chi COVID Coach App](#) was developed to help you determine what to do if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Once you sign up, CDPH will check back with you via text message. CDPH will let you know what you and the other people in your household should do to limit the spread of COVID-19, help you know how long you need to stay separated from others, and give you day-by-day guidance throughout a potential isolation or quarantine period.

Adhere to the following guidelines:

If you are mildly ill and can recover at home, follow the steps below to care for yourself and to help protect other people in your home and community.

- **Stay home**, except to get medical care
- **Maintain a 6ft distance or more** between yourselves and people who don't live in your household
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- **Avoid sharing personal household items**
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes**
- **Wear a face covering** when in public and around others (even at home)
- **Clean and disinfect frequently** touched surfaces daily, like doorknobs, light switches, phones, and faucets
- **Monitor your health daily and** watch for symptoms of COVID-19
- **Call ahead** before visiting your doctor

Learn more at [Centers of Disease Control & Prevention](#)

If You Are Exposed to COVID-19

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and asymptomatic:

It is recommended that people who are not fully vaccinated quarantine and get tested immediately after being identified, and, if negative, tested again in 5-7 days after last exposure or immediately if symptoms develop during quarantine.

There are two additional options for how long quarantine should last, depending on local availability of viral testing:

- **OPTION 1:** If an individual has no symptoms and receives a negative PCR or antigen test result at least 5 days after last contact, they can discontinue quarantine **after 7 days**

- **OPTION 2:** Quarantine can be discontinued **after 10 days** (from last close contact) if an individual remains asymptomatic without a negative viral test.

Interim Testing and Quarantine Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People

Effective July 28, 2021, **fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 should get tested 5-7 days following the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.** If they test positive, they should isolate as described on [page 7](#).

Fully vaccinated people who live in a household with someone who is immunosuppressed, at increased risk of severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children <12 years of age) could also consider masking at home for 14 days following a known exposure or until they receive a negative test result.

Most fully vaccinated people who are a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case are not required to quarantine if they follow the above criteria. Those who are not required to quarantine should monitor their health for 14 days after exposure.

If You Test Positive for COVID-19

If you test positive for COVID-19, you must stay home for at least 10 days after symptoms first appear and be symptom-free for at least 24 hours, including fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

- If you test positive but do not have symptoms, stay home for 10 days following the first positive test.
- You should not be required to show negative tests to return to work.
- If a letter for work is required, you can get a work excuse note from your doctor. The Chicago Department of Public Health can provide a work excuse note for COVID-19 cases and their close contacts if they are a Chicago resident.

We encourage you to communicate and cooperate with contact tracers. If you receive a call from 312-74-COVID (312-742-6843), please provide the contact tracer with as much information as possible. Your name will not be shared with any other agencies, such as law enforcement or immigration, or with any of their contacts. This is an important strategy for minimizing the spread of the virus.

Additional Resources

Vaccination Information

- [CDPH Vaccine Planning](#)

Testing Location information

- [Testing locations in the city of Chicago](#)

- [Testing Locations in the state of Illinois](#)

City of Chicago Resources

- [CDPH Guide to Managing Your Health](#)
- [CDPH Latest COVID-19 Guidance](#)
- [City of Chicago Anti-Retaliation Ordinance](#)

Additional CDC Guidance

- [Your Health | COVID-19 | CDC](#)
- [BACP COVID-19 Resource Center](#)