Employees Returning to Work After Testing Positive for COVID-19

Guidelines From:

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY.

Department
of Health

Return to Work Criteria for Employees with Confirmed COVID-19

Use the Test-based strategy as the preferred method for determining when an employee may return to work.

Test-based strategy. Exclude from work until:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **and**
- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Employees with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms should be excluded from work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions

After returning to work, employee should:

Wear a facemask for source control at all times until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer. A facemask instead of a cloth face covering should be used for source control during this time period.

A facemask for source control does not replace the need to wear an N95 or higher-level respirator (or other recommended PPE) when indicated. Of note, N95 or other respirators with an exhaust valve might not provide source control.

Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

Protocols for Essential Personnel to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection

Essential personnel with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may be permitted to work in the required workplace setting if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Working from home would adversely impact essential services or functions, including critical public health and public works infrastructure in New York or the response to the COVID-19 public health emergency;

2. Personnel have maintained isolation for at least 7 days after illness onset (i.e. symptoms first appeared) and have not had a fever for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications, and with other symptoms improving;

3. Personnel who are recovering from COVID-19, and return to work, must wear a face mask* for 14 days following onset of illness.

For the purposes of this guidance, a facemask is a well-secured mask that covers the mouth and nose. No personal fit testing is necessary for a facemask.

Tips For Keeping Your Workforce Comfortable When Previously Sick Employees Return to Work

- Social Distancing: Plan work for 6 feet of separation between workers
- Designate a Social Distancing Officer (SDO)
- Plan gatherings and breaks for groups of 10 or less
- Clean and disinfect surfaces

- Ensure you have adequate hand washing stations
- Provide PPE to prevent transmission
- Restrict the number of visitors to the office and/or jobsite
- Screen visitors prior to arrival

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