

COVID-19 RETURN TO WORK DECISION TREE

A. Employee displays and/or discloses that she is experiencing a COVID-19 symptom¹

- Symptoms for COVID-19 can be found on the CDC's [website](#), which is continually updated. Check for updates prior to assessing employee's return to work status. Current symptoms listed include:
 - Fever or chills (100.4 F or greater)
 - Cough
 - 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
- Employer should immediately:
 - Notify supervisor and send employee home (or inform employee she cannot report to work)
 - Contact local department of health
- Employee should:
 - Contact health care provider
 - Contact local health department
 - Obtain COVID-19 test
- Employee may not return to work until:
 - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without use of fever-reducing medication and improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms
AND
 - 10 days have passed since symptoms began **OR**
 - 20 days have passed since symptoms began in serious cases (consult medical provider and department of health);
 - **OR**
 - 2 negative COVID tests (at least 24 hours apart) (consult physician or local health department as this strategy is no longer recommended in the majority of cases)

¹ Employers are permitted to ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus, according to the EEOC's FAQs, which can be found [here](#). Caution: Additional questioning about an employee's health condition outside of listed pandemic symptoms may be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

B. Employee tests positive for COVID-19²

- Employer should immediately:
 - Notify supervisor and send employee home (or inform employee she cannot report to work)
 - Contact local department of health
- If employee has not had symptoms, employee still may not return to work until:
 - At least 10 days have passed since date of first positive test.
- If employee also has symptoms, see Section A.

C. Employee has no symptoms and has not tested positive, but has been EXPOSED to someone who is known to be positive or has symptoms of COVID-19

- **EXPOSURE** = within 6 feet for more than 15 consecutive minutes (starting from 2 days before infected individual’s illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection))
- Employer must:
 - Notify supervisor and send employee home (or notify employee she cannot report to work)
- Employee may not return to work until:
 - 14 days of quarantine after date of last “exposure”
 - If employee develops symptoms or tests positive, refer to Section A or B

D. Employee has indirect or secondary exposure to someone who is known to be positive for COVID-19

- Indirect exposure: In contact with someone who tested positive, but not within 6 feet and/or for over 15 minutes
 - Example: Employee dines at a restaurant and later finds out a server, who did not spend more than 15 min at the employee’s table, tested positive.
- Secondary exposure: Exposure to someone who has been exposed to someone who tested positive.
 - Example: Employee lives with a roommate who has had exposure to someone who tests positive for COVID-19.
- Employer should:
 - Ascertain as much information as possible from the employee about the exposure.

² Employers should be considering positive COVID-19 tests only – NOT antibody tests. The CDC has been [clear](#) that “antibody test results should not be used to make decisions about returning persons to the workplace.”



- Contact the department of health or public health department, explain the circumstances of the employee's indirect or secondary exposure, and obtain guidance regarding returning this employee to work.
- Employee should:
 - Contact local health department and explain the circumstances of indirect / secondary exposure and obtain guidance regarding returning to work.
 - Contact the employer about the potential indirect or secondary exposure and provide as much information as possible to the employer regarding this potential exposure.
 - Be prepared to stay home until health department advises on a safe return to work.
 - Provide written isolation or quarantine plan to employer.