

Return to Work Guidance after COVID-19 Illness or Exposure to a Confirmed Case

Guidance for employers and managers to determine when an employee who tested positive for COVID-19 or exposed to a positive COVID-19 case can safely return to work

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harris County Continuity of Government (COG) is an essential function and is important to ensure that vital services are met. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in conjunction with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), provide guidance for non-essential employees and recommendations for those that are deemed critical infrastructure workers or essential employees (hereafter referred to solely as ‘essential employees’). This document serves as a basis for Harris County Public Health’s (HCPH) return to work general guidance for Harris County employees. While it is highly recommended by HCPH that this guidance is implemented for determining when an employee should return to work, the employee’s manager maintains discretion to vary from the recommendations if the employee is classified essential and remains asymptomatic (see page 3 for additional information). For specific questions, the department should contact Public Health at 832-927-7575 or the Continuity of Government Task Force COGTaskForce@hctx.net.

VACCINATION STATUS

*Vaccination status disclosure for employees is voluntary, management may not require that an employee disclose vaccination status or keep a record about an employee’s vaccination status at any time. Management will presume all employees are **not** fully vaccinated and up-to-date if not voluntarily disclosed.*

Fully Vaccinated and Up-to-Date	Non-Vaccinated/Partially Vaccinated
<p>Employees who have received a booster OR have completed the primary series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines (2 doses) in the last 5 months, OR have completed the primary series of the J&J vaccine (1 dose) in the last 2 months.</p>	<p>Employees who are unvaccinated OR completed the first two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines more than 5 months ago and are not boosted, OR completed the first dose of the J&J vaccine over 2 months ago and are not boosted.</p>

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS

If an employee tests positive and has developed symptoms (regardless of vaccination status):

The employee should isolate/quarantine and test at the end of a 5-day isolation and quarantine period. **Day 0 is your first day of symptoms or a positive PCR/antigen test. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed or your test specimen was collected.**

POSITIVE / SYMPTOMATIC	STAY HOME	END ISOLATION	UNTIL DAY 10
<p>If the employee tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home and isolate for at least 5 full days Wear a well-fitting mask around others to include family members Get tested at least 5 days after symptom onset or positive test result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End isolation after 5 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If fever free (without medication) - If symptoms did not develop - If symptoms have improved <p>*A negative PCR/Antigen test is not required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days any time around others to include family members Avoid contact with people who are more likely to become very ill from COVID-19

If a Fully Vaccinated employee has been exposed:

FULLY VACCINATED and UP-TO-DATE	NO QUARANTINE	MONITOR FOR SYMPTOMS	UNTIL DAY 10
If the employee is exposed to COVID-19, and is up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. See below for additional guidance concerning essential employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not need to stay home unless symptoms develop Get tested 5 days after exposure even if asymptomatic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for symptoms until 10 days after exposure to someone with COVID-19 If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and get tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days around others Avoid contact with people who are more likely to become very ill from COVID-19

If a Non-Vaccinated or Partially Vaccinated employee has been exposed:

NON / PARTIALLY VACCINATED	STAY HOME	END QUARANTINE	UNTIL DAY 10
If the employee is exposed to COVID-19 and is <u>NOT</u> up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. See below for additional guidance concerning essential employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay home and quarantine for at least 5 full days Wear a well-fitting mask around others to include family members Get tested at least 5 days after being exposed to someone with COVID-19, even if asymptomatic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End quarantine after 5 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for symptoms until 10 days after last exposure to someone with COVID-19 - *A negative PCR/Antigen test is not required If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and get tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days around others Avoid contact with people who are more likely to become very ill from COVID-19

After day 5 of a positive test, employees should perform a second PCR/antigen test:

- If the employee continues to test positive after day 5 but is fever free (without medication for 24 hours) with improved symptoms, then they may return to normal duties.
- If the employee tests positive after day 5 but is not fever free or has experienced new or continued symptoms, then they should not return to normal duties. This continues up until day 10, if the employee is testing positive on day 10 with continued symptoms they may return to work if physically able, masking is highly recommended.
- If the employee tests negative after day 5 and is fever free (without medication for 24 hours) with improved symptoms, then they may return to normal duties. ***A negative test is NOT required to return to work**
- If the employee tests negative after day 5 but is not fever free or has experienced new or continued symptoms, then they should not return to normal duties. This continues up until day 10, if the employee is testing negative on day 10 with continued symptoms they may return to work if physically able. ***A negative test is NOT required to return to work**

If an employee tests positive or is symptomatic:

- **If Employee is at Home:** Instruct employee to stay home. Do not allow employee to return to work until they meet criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- **If Employee is at Work:** Send employee home and do not allow an employee to return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation. Instruct employee to go home immediately and isolate.
- **Telework:** Positive employees may work remotely, regardless of vaccination status, if the employee is able and well enough to perform work duties.

Masking: Universal masking is still recommended for all on-site employees regardless of vaccination status; follow County policies regarding wearing face coverings.

Social Distance: Employees should maintain a minimum of 6ft of social distance. Departments to the (fullest extent possible), should make every effort to ensure social distancing recommendations are followed by all employees.

Disinfect and Clean Workspaces: As soon as possible clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment routinely with a disinfectant that is EPA approved and effective against SARS-CoV-2.

Definitions:

Isolation: a public health strategy used to separate people infected with COVID-19 from people who are not infected.

Quarantine: a public health strategy used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others.

Infectious Period: the time when a person can spread the virus to others. For COVID-19, the infectious period begins 48 hours before symptom onset until 10 days from the time of symptoms onset or first positive.

Exposure: Contact with someone infected with SARS-CoV-2, in a way that increases the likelihood of getting infected with the virus. The employee would be considered a close contact, if they were less than 6 feet from an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period (Ex: three isolated 5-minute exposures, for a total of 15 minutes).

IF YOU ARE AN ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE EXPOSED TO COVID-19

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your temperature before work. • Wear a face mask at all times. • Practice social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at work if you become sick. • Share headsets or objects used near face. • Congregate in the break room or other crowded places.
	

IF YOU ARE A MANAGER OF ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE EXPOSED TO COVID-19

DO

- Take employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to their starting work.
- If an employee becomes sick during the day, send them home immediately.
- Test the use of face masks to ensure they do not interfere with workflow.
- Increase air exchange in the building.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning commonly touched surfaces.

