



## COVID-19 Diagnosis in the Workplace

### What do I do if my employee tests positive for COVID-19?

Anytime someone tests positive for COVID-19, the local health department gives them guidance and next steps, including asking them to isolate and their close contacts to quarantine to protect others from getting sick. This situation can be stressful and overwhelming, and it is important that you support your employees as they take necessary steps to keep your workplace safe and healthy.

The guidance outlined in this document is based on CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>). This guidance applies to most people, but more specific guidance may supersede this for employees from certain sectors, such as people who work in congregate living facilities and critical infrastructure workers. This guidance may also not apply to people who are advised to stay in isolation longer by their health care provider, including people with weakened immune systems. Be ready to work with the local health department to gather important information. The Health Department is notified whenever someone tests positive for COVID-19 in Huron County.

### When can employees with COVID-19 return to work?

To know when it is safe for an employee to return to work, refer to the following two strategies:

**For people who have symptoms**, use the symptom-based strategy. Exclude from work until:

- At least 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications; **and**
- Symptoms have improved; **and**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

**For people who do not have symptoms**, use the time-based strategy. **Exclude from work until:** 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test if they have not developed symptoms. If they develop symptoms, then use the symptom-based strategy outlined above.

**\*\*Neither a negative test for COVID-19 nor a letter from the Department of Health should be required to return to work.\*\***

More information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

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## When can close contacts to someone with COVID-19 return to work?

People who had close contact with someone with COVID-19 will be asked by the health department to stay home from work for 14 days since the last day they were in contact with the person who tested positive.

If the close contact is a household member of a positive case, their quarantine period may be extended further than 14 days, depending on whether or not the positive case has successfully isolated themselves to another part of the home. See guidance here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> (Scenario 4).

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase in Huron County, HCPH prioritizes following up with all positive test results received. Due to this, when there is an increased number of positive cases, HCPH may not be able to call each close contact per positive individual and will instead ask the positive individual to share quarantine instructions with their close contacts. If an employee states that they were notified of being a close contact by a positive individual, we ask that employers believe their staff and allow the employee to quarantine for 14 days since the last day they were in contact with them. This is **essential** to slowing/stopping the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

HCPH recommends establishing safety protocols or workplace station charts to assist in keeping track of which employees may be considered close contacts if an employee is to test positive. This may help an employer know who to exclude from work if a positive case is to arise in the workplace.

**Please note:** Due to the high volume of COVID-19 cases we are currently experiencing, HCPH will no longer be providing isolation/quarantine letters for employment purposes. Laboratory results and/or physician documentation should be used at this time. HCPH will reassess our abilities to provide this documentation at a later date if and when COVID-19 case numbers reported begin to decrease.

### You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Maintaining confidentiality of the individual who tested positive
- Encouraging employees who come into contact with patrons or other employees to wear masks.
- Sharing resources on prevention and staying safe.
- Asking employees to watch for symptoms and stay home if they experience any, including: fever of over 100.4°F, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Cleaning and disinfecting the workplace.

More information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

### Cleaning After COVID-19 Diagnosis

If it has been less than seven days since the employee who tested positive has been in the workplace, clean and disinfect areas that were used by the employee for a long period of time. In most cases, when appropriate steps are taken quickly, there is no need to shut down the workplace. Find more information about cleaning here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>.