

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 here is based on CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19. 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 Ottawa 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.
- 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.

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



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.

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. For more information about mask use, see [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#).
- 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.
- Clean and disinfect the workplace.

<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. Find more information about cleaning here. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html> . In most cases, when appropriate steps are taken quickly, there is no need to shut down the workplace.

