

# What Employers and Workers Need to Know about COVID-19 Isolation & Quarantine

May 6, 2022

This fact sheet provides employers and workers not covered by the **Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard** with information on when and for how long workers must be excluded from the workplace if they test positive or are exposed to someone who has COVID-19. The chart below reflects the new California Department of Public Health (CDPH) isolation and quarantine periods guidance from April 6, 2022 and the third re-adoption of the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Regulation effective May 6, 2022.

More information is available on [Cal/OSHA’s ETS FAQs](#) and [CDPH’s Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#).

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the workplace as described in Table 1. For employees who had a close contact, employers must review [CDPH guidance](#) and implement quarantine and other measures in the workplace to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. Please refer to table 2 and table 3 below for CDPH quarantine guidance after close contact.

Where the tables below refer to action to be taken on a specified day (e.g. “day 5” or “day 10”), day 1 is the first day following the onset of symptoms or, if no symptoms develop, the day following the first positive test.

**Table 1: Exclusion Requirements for Employees Who Test Positive for COVID-19**

<p>Requirements apply to <b>all</b> employees, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the workplace for at least 5 days after start of symptoms or after date of first positive test if no symptoms.</li> <li>Isolation can end and employees may return to the workplace after day 5 if symptoms are not present or are resolving, <b>and</b> a diagnostic specimen* collected on day 5 or later tests negative.</li> <li>If an employee’s test on day 5 (or later) is positive, isolation can end and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10 if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.</li> <li>If an employee is unable to or choosing not to test <sup>i</sup>, isolation can end, and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10 if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.</li> <li>If an employee has a fever<sup>ii</sup>, isolation must continue and the employee may not return to work until 24 hours after the fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications.<sup>iii</sup></li> <li>If an employee’s symptoms other than fever are not resolving, they may not return to work until their symptoms are resolving or until after day 10.</li> <li>Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days. Please refer the FAQs regarding face coverings for additional information</li> </ul> <p>*Antigen test preferred.</p>
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<sup>i</sup> An employer may require a test. More information is available in the [Department of Fair Employment and Housing FAQ](#).

<sup>ii</sup> A fever is a measured body temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

<sup>iii</sup> A fever resolves when 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**Table 2: CDPH Guidance for Close Contacts – Employees Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19. (Applies to All Employees Except those in High-Risk Settings)**

<p>For employees who are <b>asymptomatic</b>.</p> <p>Applies to all employees, regardless of vaccination status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposed employees must test within three to five days after their last close contact. Persons infected within the prior 90 days do not need to be tested unless symptoms develop.</li> <li>Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days after exposure. Please refer to the FAQs on face coverings for additional information.</li> <li>If an exposed employee tests positive for COVID- 19, they must follow the isolation requirements above in Table 1.</li> <li>Employees are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted</li> </ul>
<p>For employees who are <b>symptomatic</b>.</p> <p>Applies to all employees, regardless of vaccination status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Symptomatic employees must be excluded and test as soon as possible. Exclusion must continue until test results are obtained.</li> <li>If the employee is unable to test or choosing not to test, exclusion must continue for 10 days.</li> <li>If the employee tests negative and returns to work earlier than 10 days after the close contact, the employee must wear a face covering around others for 10 days following the close contact.</li> <li>CDPH recommends continuing exclusion and retesting in 1-2 days if testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms.</li> <li>For symptomatic employees who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, using an antigen test is preferred.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: CDPH Guidance for Close Contacts – Specified High-Risk Settings**

<p>Applies to employees who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not fully vaccinated, OR</li> <li>Not infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the prior 90 days.</li> </ul> <p>AND who work in the following high-risk settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Shelters</li> <li>Cooling and Heating Centers</li> <li>Long Term Care Settings &amp; Adult and Senior Care Facilities*</li> <li>Local correctional facilities and detention centers*</li> <li>Healthcare settings*</li> </ul> <p>* Please note that some employees in these high-risk settings are covered by the Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard (section 5199) and are subject to different requirements. Please see the Scope of Coverage section of the FAQ for additional information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposed employees must be excluded from work for at least five days after the last known close contact.</li> <li>Exclusion can end and exposed employees may return to the workplace after day 5 if symptoms are not present <b>and</b> a diagnostic specimen collected on day 5 or later tests negative.</li> <li>If an employee is unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present, work exclusion can end and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10.</li> <li>Employees in these settings must wear a face covering while indoors and around others in accordance with CDPH’s universal masking guidance.</li> <li>Employees are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.</li> <li>If employees develop symptoms after returning to work, they must be excluded from the workplace and test as soon as possible. If employees test positive, they must follow the isolation requirements in Table 1.</li> </ul>
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## Commonly Asked Questions

### When do workers need to be paid exclusion pay if exposed to COVID-19?

When workers are required to be excluded from work due to work-related COVID-19 exposure, they must be paid exclusion pay. Workers should speak with their employers about available exclusion pay. Some exceptions apply, for example if the worker can work from home, or they are receiving disability pay or Workers' Compensation Temporary Disability Payments.

### What does CDPH guidance require if a worker was exposed to COVID-19 but tests are not available?

If a worker in a non-high-risk setting cannot be tested as required but never develops symptoms, the worker may continue to work but must wear a face covering for 10 days after the close contact. If the worker works in a high-risk setting, they should continue isolation for 10 days, as explained in the table.

This guidance is an overview, for full requirements see Title 8 sections [3205](#), [3205.1](#), [3205.2](#), [3205.3](#), [3205.4](#)

### Update History

- January 19, 2022 – Updated to clarify this fact sheet does not apply to workplaces covered by the Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standard.
- May 6, 2022 – Updated to align with new CDPH guidance for general population and adding high-risk settings.

For assistance with developing a COVID-19 Prevention Program, employers may contact Cal/OSHA Consultation Services at 1 800 963 9424 or [InfoCons@dir.ca.gov](mailto:InfoCons@dir.ca.gov)

For Consultation information or publications, access the following link or copy the site address:  
**DOSHConsultation** [www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html)

