

## Return to Work Criteria for Essential Employees with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19

Use one of the below strategies to determine when an essential employee may return to work:

1. *Test-based strategy (this option may not available due to testing availability).*  
Exclude from work until:
  - Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
  - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **and**
  - Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected  $\geq 24$  hours apart (total of two negative specimens)
2. *Non-test-based strategy.*  
Exclude from work until:
  - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and,**
  - At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*

If workers were never tested for COVID-19 but have an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.

### **Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions**

After returning to work, essential employees should:

- Wear a facemask at all times while in the workplace until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- Be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised people/patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles)
- Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from health care provider if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

Source: edited from "CDC guidelines on health care professionals";  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavir/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html>

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