



Employees with COVID-19 or Exposed to COVID-19: Return to Work

The exclusion requirements below are for employees in non-healthcare settings. See [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) for the full DPH Guidelines.

Table 1: Exclusion and Return to Work Requirements for Employees with COVID-19 (Isolation)

Requirements for Persons with COVID-19 (Isolation) - Everyone identified as a COVID-19 case must be excluded from the workplace, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms. Infected healthcare personnel—see [Work Restrictions for HCP with COVID-19](#).

To count the days:

- For symptomatic employees: Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms developed.
- For employees without symptoms: Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected.

Employee must be excluded from the workplace for at least 5 days after the start of symptoms or after date of first positive test if no symptoms.

Isolation can end and employee may return to the workplace *after* Day 5 if both of the following criteria are met:

1. The employee has been fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine, AND
2. Other symptoms are not present, or symptoms are mild and improving.

If they do have a fever, isolation must continue, and the employee may not return to work until 24 hours after the fever resolves.

If an employee's symptoms other than fever are not improving, they may not return to work until their symptoms are resolving or until after Day 10.

Employee must[±] wear a well-fitting mask around others through Day 10.

Employers must provide the masks at no expense to the employee and ensure that they are worn. See [Cal/OSHA standards 3205\(f\)\(1\)](#). Note: Upon employee request, Employers must provide NIOSH-approved respirators (e.g., N95 masks) to all employees who are working indoors or in vehicles with more than one person. See [Cal/OSHA FAQs](#) for additional details.

Consider sharing with workers the LAC DPH flyer [Protect Yourself From COVID-19 in the Workplace: Know Which Masks Provide the Best Protection](#).

[±]See [Cal/OSHA standards 3205\(f\)\(2\)](#) for masking exceptions. LAC DPH recommends that workers, permitted by Cal/OSHA regulations to temporarily remove their mask to conduct specific tasks that cannot feasibly be performed while masked (such as professional performers), have a negative COVID-19 test result prior to performing those tasks. The test should be conducted on the same day of, and prior to, unmasking for the work. For workers continuing to test positive, LAC DPH recommends delaying unmasked tasks until they test negative or after Day 11.

Employee should follow the full isolation instructions for people with COVID-19 at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.





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Table 2. Employees that are Close Contacts [Non-Outbreak Setting¹]

Recommended Actions for Persons with Close Contact Exposure to Someone with COVID-19

These actions apply to all asymptomatic employees in non-healthcare settings that are identified as workplace close contacts, regardless of vaccination status.

Exposed healthcare personnel—see [Asymptomatic Healthcare Personnel with Exposures](#).

To count the days: Day 1 is the first full day after their last exposure.

Employee should wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors for a total of 10 days after their last close contact.

Employers should provide the masks at no expense to the employee. Note: Upon employee request, Employers must provide NIOSH-approved respirators (e.g., N95 masks) to all employees who are working indoors or in vehicles with more than one person. See [Cal/OSHA FAQs](#) for additional details.

Consider sharing with workers the LAC DPH flyer [Protect Yourself From COVID-19 in the Workplace: Know Your Mask Rights](#).

Employee should test within 3-5 days after their last close contact with the case unless they have recently recovered from COVID-19.

- If they test positive, they must be excluded from the workplace and follow Table 1.

Employee should monitor their health for 10 days

If symptoms develop, exclude the employee from the workplace pending COVID-19 test results.

- If they test positive or their doctor diagnoses them with COVID-19, they must be excluded from the workplace and follow Table 1.
- If the employee tests negative and returns to work, the employee must continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors for 10 days following the close contact.
 - Note: if symptoms persist, CDPH [recommends](#) considering continuing self-isolation and retesting in 1-2 days if testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms.
- For symptomatic employees who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, an antigen test is recommended.

¹ These recommendations are for non-outbreak settings only. During outbreaks, additional requirements will be applicable and guided by public health investigation.

