



COVID-19: DOH Issues Updated Return-to-Work Protocols

On July 3, 2020, the New York State Department of Health ([DOH](#)) announced updated return-to-work [protocols](#) for health care personnel, excluding [nursing home](#) personnel, following COVID-19 infection or exposure.

Personnel exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case or who traveled internationally within the past 14 days may return to work if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Furloughing such personnel would result in staff shortages that would adversely impact the operation of the healthcare entity and all other staffing options have been exhausted.
2. Such personnel are asymptomatic.
3. Such personnel self-monitor twice a day (i.e. temperature, symptoms), and undergo temperature monitoring and symptom checks at the beginning of each shift, and at least every 12 hours during a shift.
4. Such personnel wear a facemask while working, until 14 days after the last high-risk exposure.
5. To the extent possible, such personnel should be assigned to patients at lower-risk for severe complications.
6. Such personnel should maintain self-quarantine when not at work for a full 14 days.
7. At any time, if such personnel develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should immediately stop work and isolate at home. All staff with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be immediately referred for diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2.

Personnel who traveled to a state with high COVID-19 community spread within the past 14 days may return to work if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Furloughing such personnel would result in staff shortages that would adversely impact operation of the healthcare entity, and all other staffing options have been exhausted.
2. Such personnel are asymptomatic.
3. Such personnel received diagnostic testing for COVID-19 within 24 hours of arrival in New York.
4. Such personnel self-monitor twice a day (i.e. temperature, symptoms), and receive temperature monitoring and symptom checks at the beginning of each shift, and at least every 12 hours during a shift.
5. Such personnel wear a facemask while working.
6. To the extent possible, such personnel should be assigned to patients at lower risk for severe complications.
7. Such personnel should maintain self-quarantine when not at work.
8. At any time, if such personnel develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should immediately stop work and isolate at home. All staff with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be immediately referred for diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2.

Personnel with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may continue working if all of the following conditions are met:

1. To be eligible to return to work, such personnel must have maintained isolation for at least 10 days after illness onset, must have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, and must have other symptoms improving.
2. Any such personnel who are severely immunocompromised as a result of medical conditions or medications should consult with a healthcare provider before returning to work. Providers should consider seeking consultation from an infectious disease expert for these cases.
3. If such personnel is asymptomatic but tested and found to be positive, they must maintain isolation for at least 10 days after the date of the positive test and, if they develop symptoms during that time, they must maintain isolation for at least 10 days after illness onset and must have been at least 72 hours fever-free without fever reducing medications and with other symptoms improving.
4. Personnel who are recovering from COVID-19 and return to work after 10 days should wear a facemask while working until symptoms have completely resolved, so long as mild symptoms are improving, if they persist.
5. In the rare instance when any personnel with unique or irreplaceable skills critical to patient care has a positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, but remains asymptomatic, the provider may contact DOH to discuss alternative measures to allow such personnel to safely return to work before 10 days from such positive diagnostic test have elapsed.

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