

Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Isolation or Quarantine

Guidance for Employers

Santa Cruz County does not provide individualized clearance letters for returning to work following COVID-19 isolation or quarantine.

Employees should instead follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) criteria for returning to work using a symptoms-based strategy.

- **For individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and/or have symptoms, isolation may end after 10 days.*** Research shows that people who test positive and experience mild to moderate symptoms are no longer infectious 10 days after symptoms begin.
- **For individuals exposed to COVID-19 who do not have symptoms, quarantine may end after 14 days from last day of exposure.*** Symptoms can appear within 14 days after exposure. Recommendations for when to end quarantine are different from isolation to take into account the time it takes for symptoms to develop, if infected. For additional information on when to start and end quarantine visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

Re-testing individuals for COVID-19 is not recommended for determining when an employee can return to work. Recovered individuals can continue to test positive for up to three months after initial infection, even though they are no longer infectious.

***Refer to chart for detailed guidance**

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
Public Health Division

Return to Work Criteria Using a Symptoms-Based Strategy

First responders and healthcare workers should follow their workplace protocols for returning to work. All other workers should self-attest that they meet the following criteria:

Following COVID-19 Infection

Individuals Who:

- ▶ Test positive and have symptoms
- OR
- ▶ Test negative but have symptoms
- OR
- ▶ Have not been tested but have symptoms

May Return to Work:

- ✔ When at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- AND
- ✔ When at least 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication
- AND
- ✔ When symptoms have improved

- ▶ Test positive and never develop symptoms

- ✔ 10 days after their first positive test for COVID-19

Following COVID-19 Exposure

Individuals Who:

- ▶ Test negative and do not have symptoms
- OR
- ▶ Have not been tested and do not have symptoms

May Return to Work:

- ✔ 14 days after last exposure to infectious person has passed. Symptoms can develop even after testing negative within 14 days after exposure

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, and new loss of taste or smell.

Sources:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Guidance-on-Returning-to-Work-or-School-Following-COVID-19-Diagnosis.aspx#>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

