



New CDC Guidance For Critical Workers Returning To Work After Potential COVID-19 Exposure

April 9, 2020 | [Employee Health Issues, Labor And Employment](#)



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The CDC has posted [Interim Guidance](#) to assist employers of critical infrastructure workers in safely returning those employees to work **after potential exposure** to COVID-19. “Potential exposure” to COVID-19 means “being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19,” and includes not only contact while the individual is showing symptoms, but also any contact with the individual during the 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

Specifically, the CDC has advised that critical infrastructure workers *may* return to work after potential exposure, so long as they remain asymptomatic and the following additional precautions are implemented:

- **Prescreening:** Employers should measure the employee’s temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, the temperature check should occur *before* the individual enters the facility.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee has no temperature and remains asymptomatic, they should self-monitor under the supervision of the employer’s occupational health program.
- **Wearing a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask *at all times*

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in the workplace for *14 days after last exposure*. (Note: Employers can provide the face masks or can approve the employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.)

- **Social Distancing:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfecting and Cleaning:** Employers should engage in routine cleaning/disinfecting of all work areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common spaces, and shared electronic equipment.

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should *immediately* be sent home, and all surfaces in their workspace should immediately be cleaned and disinfected. The employer should also compile information on anyone who had contact with the ill employee *during the time the employee showed symptoms or the two days prior to symptoms*, and all others at the facility who had close contact within 6 feet of the ill employee during such time should be considered exposed.

Regardless of whether any of their employees have known potential exposure, it is important for all employers of critical infrastructure workers to bear in mind that they should be making every effort to implement safety and cleanliness measures during this time. Both CDC's [Interim Guidance](#) and its recently published "do's and don'ts" resource offer some helpful reminders to employers and employees alike.