



**Requirements for Employees Returning to Work Sites after not Passing Health Screening,  
COVID-19 Illness or Exposure  
Updated 8/15/2020  
Revised 9/3/2020, 11/4/2020,  
Revised: 4/1/2021**

**April 1, 2021 Revision note:** *This revision reflects the recent update to the Centers for Disease Control Guidance adopted by the SF Department of Public Health on “close contact” quarantine requirements for individuals who are 14 days post vaccination for 1-dose vaccines or 14 days after their second dose for 2-dose vaccines. These individuals no longer need to quarantine as a result of a close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19 unless they develop symptoms. The modified rule does not apply to those in congregate/jail settings who must still quarantine for 14 days after a close contact regardless of vaccination status. The changes are reflected in the Health Screening Questions. Furthermore, management of potential COVID-19 symptoms in a fully vaccinated person does not necessarily require isolation, quarantine, and testing. Instead, you should talk to your healthcare provider about when you can return to work and if you need a COVID-19 test. Additional language has been added to affirm that departments should not inquire an employee to divulge their vaccination status at this time because it may be considered private health information.*

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) has issued guidance for determining when it is safe for an employee to reenter their worksite after a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection or close contact with a person with a known COVID-19 infection. These requirements for City employees reflect the most current guidance from SFPDH and must be followed to ensure individual and collective safety, workplace safety, and public safety. These requirements are in addition to the required daily routine screening for COVID-19 symptoms and certification that all employees must perform before entry into the workplace, as outlined in the health screening requirements document.

The procedures and criteria apply to all City employees in all departments who are returning to work after COVID-19 illness or exposure. Certain departments may apply more stringent criteria to employees based on the nature of their work.

Employees who are fully vaccinated may be able to return to work sooner or may not be required to quarantine at all. Each employee should consider their vaccination status when responding to the screening questions. At this time, you should not ask employees to reveal their vaccination status.

**GUIDANCE FOR NON-VACCINATED EMPLOYEES:**

**COVID-19 ILLNESS or SYMPTOMS in NON-VACCINATED EMPLOYEES**

If an employee tests NEGATIVE for COVID-19 and did not have a known close contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms, they may return to work if:

- Free of fever over 100.4° F for 24 hours (and without the use of fever reducing medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen), **and**
- Their symptoms are improving.

If an employee tests POSITIVE for COVID-19, before entering a worksite the employee must:

- Be free of fever over 100.4° F for 24 hours (and without the use of fever reducing medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen), **and**
- Have improving symptoms, **and**
- Have served a 10-day isolation period from the date of the first symptoms.
- There is no requirement to retest after a positive COVID test, and this is unnecessary for workplace re-entry.

If the employee did not get tested or is still waiting for their test results, before entering the worksite they must:

- Be free of fever over 100.4° F for 24 hours (and without the use of fever reducing medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen), **and**
- Have improving symptoms, **and**
- Have served a 10-day isolation period from the date of the first symptoms.

Isolation may need to be longer than 10 days if an employee continues to be sick. Employees who do not meet the improving symptom criteria for return to work must continue to isolate longer than 10 days until they meet the required 24 hours free of fever and improving symptoms.

**COVID-19 EXPOSURE WITHOUT SYMPTOMS for NON-VACCINATED EMPLOYEES.** Employees who have had a close contact with someone with COVID-19 must quarantine for **10 days** from the date of the most recent contact (those working at the jails or other congregate settings must quarantine for **14** days from a close contact). This quarantine period is necessary to cover the incubation period of the virus. Employees who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the quarantine period should follow the instructions for return-to-work for those experiencing symptoms (see above).

Close contact is defined as:

- living in the same household or being an intimate partner (includes only kissing) of someone who has confirmed COVID-19
- spending more than 15 minutes total over 24 hours within six feet of someone with confirmed COVID-19 regardless of whether either party wore a face covering or
- having direct contact for any amount of time with the bodily fluids and/or secretions of someone with confirmed COVID-19

A close contact does not include employees who are required to work with individuals who may have COVID-19, provided that they are wearing the appropriate PPE during the encounter.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR VACCINATED EMPLOYEES:**

**COVID-19 like SYMPTOMS in VACCINATED EMPLOYEES.** Employees experiencing any potential COVID-19 symptoms that are not otherwise explained should not come to the worksite and should stay home. Employees who are fully vaccinated (14 days after the final dose of their COVID-19 vaccine) may not need to isolate or quarantine based on the presence of COVID-19 like symptoms. Before returning to work, they should communicate with their health care provider to determine when they can return to work and whether they will need a COVID-19 test. Employees may return to work based on the recommendation of their healthcare provider. Otherwise, they must comply with the same requirements above as for non-vaccinated employees experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

**COVID-19 EXPOSURE in VACCINATED EMPLOYEES without SYMPTOMS.** Most employees who are fully vaccinated (14 days after the final dose of their COVID-19 vaccine), do not need to isolate and quarantine after a close contact with a person with COVID-19. Those working in congregate or jail settings who are vaccinated, still need to quarantine after a close contact.

**COVID-19 EXPOSURE in VACCINATED EMPLOYEES who develop SYMPTOMS.** Vaccinated employees who develop symptoms of COVID-19 after a close contact must stay home and follow guidance above for vaccinated individuals with symptoms.

## **RETURNING TO WORK PROCESS**

Employees who believe they are ready to return to work must contact their Department Personnel Officer or other contact designated by their department to receive clearance to return.

Consistent with Civil Services Rules, employees must provide a doctor's note if they are off work for more than 5 days. If an employee is unable to provide a doctor's note, the Human Resource professional should work with their departmental physician or the Department of Human Resources' physician, Dr. Fiona Wilson, to provide clearance to return to work.

Employees must respond honestly to the return to work questions, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Upon returning to work, employees must follow all workplace safety requirements, including conducting a daily screening for symptoms, wearing facial coverings, and maintaining safe physical distance.

Departmental Personnel Officers who have questions about an employee's individual circumstance or ability to return to work should reach out to Dr. Wilson.

Additional Resources:

**Fully-Vaccinated Guidance:** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html#anchor\\_1615135598178](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html#anchor_1615135598178)

**Home Isolation and Quarantine:** <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/Guidance-Isolation-and-Quarantine.pdf>

**Screening Guidance link:** <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07-Personnel-Screening-Attachment-A-1.pdf>

**Returning to Work link:** <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Return-to-Work-Leaving-Isolation.pdf>