



**Requirements for Employees Returning to Work Sites after COVID-19 Illness or Exposure**  
**Updated 8/15/2020**  
**Revised 9/17/2020**

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) 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 SFDPH 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.

**COVID-19 ILLNESS.** Before entering a worksite, all employees with lab confirmed or suspected COVID-19 illness 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; if the employee never had symptoms then the only criteria is that the employee serves a 10-day isolation period from the date that the employee first took the test for COVID-19 with positive results.

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. There is no requirement to retest after a positive COVID test because employees do **not** need a negative test result before returning to work. Positive tests may continue long after the infectious period.

**COVID-19 EXPOSURE.** Employees who have had a close contact with someone with COVID-19 must quarantine for **14 days** from the date of the most recent contact. This quarantine period is necessary to cover the incubation period of the virus. Close contact is defined as:

- living in the same household or being an intimate partner of someone who has confirmed COVID-19
- spending more than 15 minutes 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 (e.g., was coughed or sneezed on, shared utensils with, or

was provided care by or provided care for them without wearing a mask, gown, and gloves).

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.

### **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:

<https://www.sfc-dcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID19-Return-to-Work-Leaving-Isolation-2020-08-06-1.pdf>