

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Riverside University Health System – Public Health

ISOLATION

What is isolation?

Isolation: Separates those infected with a contagious disease from people who are not infected.

For more information, please refer to the California department of Public Health (CDPH) [COVID-19 Isolation Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#)

Healthcare personnel in general acute care hospitals, acute psychiatric hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities should follow recommendations as set forth in [AFL 21-08.9](#). Healthcare personnel working in settings not covered by [AFL 21-08.9](#) may also follow the guidance outlined in [AFL 21-08.9](#). Healthcare facilities should follow the guidance for management of exposed or infected patients/residents in the [CDC COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#).

What is the definition for potential infectious period?

The potential infectious period is 2 days before the date of symptoms began or the positive test date (if no symptoms) through Day 10. (Day 0 is the symptom onset date or positive test date).

For more information, please refer to: [Public Health Order Questions & Answers: COVID-19 Disease Control and Prevention \(ca.gov\)](#)

Some immunocompromised individuals may continue to be able to spread disease longer, up to 20 days. For more information, please refer to [People Who Are Immunocompromised | CDC](#).

What is the Cal/OSHA definition for infectious period?

***The CalOSHA definition is to be used for the purpose of exclusion from work. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are still able to spread disease to others even if they are not having symptoms.**

Cal/OSHA Definition: “Infectious period” for the purpose of cases the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Standards, is now defined as:

o For COVID-19 cases with symptoms, it is a minimum of 24 hours from the day of symptom onset:

- COVID-19 cases may return if 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- Their symptoms are mild and improving.

o For COVID-19 cases with no symptoms, there is no requirement of isolation or exclusion. If symptoms develop, the criteria above will apply.

For more information, please refer to [UDPATE: COVID-19 Prevention - Non-Emergency Regulation What Employers Need to Know Executive Summary \(ca.gov\)](#)

What is the definition of close contact?

- In indoor spaces 400,000 or fewer cubic feet per floor (classroom, gymnasium, etc.), a close contact is defined as sharing the same indoor airspace for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during an infected person's infectious period.
- In large indoor spaces greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor (open-floor-plan offices), a close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period.

Spaces that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls (e.g., offices, suites, rooms, waiting areas, bathrooms, or break or eating areas that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls) must be considered distinct indoor airspaces.

For more information, please refer to [Order of the State Public Health Officer Beyond Blueprint \(ca.gov\)](#)

What are the requirements for returning from isolation?

If symptomatic, isolation can end once [COVID-19 symptoms](#) are resolved or resolving, and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. However, staff may still be contagious longer than this period of time and may consider isolating for additional days.

If asymptomatic, there is no requirement for isolation; however, staff is still contagious and should consider isolation.

A well-fitted mask **must** be worn for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period. Staff may remove their mask sooner than Day 10 with two sequential negative tests, taken one day apart after Day 5. Please refer to CalOSHA's COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations: [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#)

Does an individual need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation?

No, not required to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation. Please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#) for additional testing information.

For more information, please refer to [Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#)

TESTING AND VACCINATION

Do exposed individuals (regardless of vaccination) need to test after exposure?

No, individuals are no longer required to test after exposure.

If you develop new [COVID-19 symptoms](#), are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 infection or have contact with people who are at higher risk for severe infection, you should consider testing immediately and masking for 10 days, especially when indoors and around others.

For more information on treatment, please refer to [Covid-19 Treatment Options | Riverside University Health System \(ruhealth.org\)](#).

For more information on higher risk individuals, please refer to [People with Certain Medical Conditions | CDC](#).

What are the current COVID vaccines and when should they be taken?

Please refer to the CDPH COVID Vaccine Timing Guide: [IMM-1396 COVIDTimingChart-NewVaccinesv3 9-14-23 \(eziz.org\)](#)

MASKING

Is masking required?

Those who test positive should mask indoors when around others during the full 10 days following symptom onset date (or positive test date if no symptoms). However, confirmed cases may remove their mask sooner than 10 full days after two sequential negative antigen tests at least one day apart. Those who have been exposed and are around individuals at elevated risk for severe COVID-19 should also consider masking for 10 days after exposure.

There are several examples of well-fitted mask options. Please visit the following link for more information [When and Why to Wear a Mask \(ca.gov\)](#).

OUTBREAK

What is an outbreak?

- At least three COVID-19 cases* within a 7-day period among people who are epidemiologically linked[†] in the setting, and are not known to be close contacts[‡] of each other in any other case investigation, OR
- For large settings (a facility or workplace with >100 persons present in the setting), particularly during high levels of community transmission, LHDs may determine that a higher proportion (at least 5%) of cases within a 7-day period may be sufficient for defining an outbreak, even in the absence of identifiable epidemiological linkages.

Please refer to [Outbreak Definition and Reporting Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#).

Who is considered an exposed group when it comes to a staff outbreak?

All employees at a work location, working area, or a common area at work, where an employee COVID-19 case was present at any time during the infectious period. A common area at work includes bathrooms, walkways, hallways, aisles, break or eating areas, and waiting areas.

How do I report an outbreak?

- Employers are to report outbreaks of 20 or more cases to Public Health by calling 951-955-6912 and to CalOSHA's Outbreak division: https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/Non_Emergency_Regulations/

- Employers may report outbreaks of 3 or more epi-linked cases (shared indoor airspace) to Public Health in an effort to best facilitate discussion of prevention and mitigation strategies in the workplace.
- **For county workers, the reporting instructions under the Protocol for Isolation for County Workers should be followed.**

What to do when there is an outbreak among staff?

During an outbreak, an employer must do the following:

- Exclude COVID-19 cases.
- Immediately make COVID-19 testing available to its employees within the exposed group, and then again one week later; and continue to make tests available to employees at least weekly until there are one or fewer new COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed group for a 14-day period, per section 3205.1(a)(2). However, an employer need not make testing available to employees who were absent from the workplace during the relevant 14-day period or who recently recovered from COVID-19 and do not have symptoms (returned cases).

Please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Prevention-Non-Emergency-Regulations.aspx) for further information regarding requirements during an outbreak.