

# Protocol for Isolation and Quarantine for First Responders

(Law Enforcement; Fire; Paramedics; Social Services  
Workers: Child Welfare and Assisted Living)

**Persons Who Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolation), regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.**

## Required Action:

**Notify the employee's supervisor. Exposure assessment should consider the specific environment of the employee, including any existing engineering controls. The exposure assessment will be conducted by the Public Health – Special Case Investigations Team (SCIT) in consultation with the DICO at the first responder agency.**

- Contact SCIT Team to discuss referral for testing.
- Stay home for at least 5 days after symptoms first arise or test date in the absence of a symptom start date.
- Isolation can end after day 5 if symptoms are not present or are resolving **and** a diagnostic specimen<sup>1</sup> collected on day 5 or later tests negative.
- If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present or are resolving, isolation must continue through day 10.
- If fever is present, isolation should be continued until at least 24 hours have passed since fever resolution.
- If symptoms, other than fever, are not resolving continue to isolate until symptoms are resolving or until after day 10.
- Per CDPH guidance, employee should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Antigen test preferred

<sup>2</sup> Masking: During the days following isolation or exposure when masks are worn, all persons should optimize mask fit and filtration ideally through use of surgical masks or respirators (e.g. an N95 mask)

## Persons Who Display Symptoms<sup>3</sup> of COVID-19

**Regardless of vaccination status or previous infection.**

### Required Action:

- Self-isolate and test as soon as possible.
  - *For symptomatic persons who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, antigen testing is preferred.*
- Remain in isolation while waiting for testing results.
  - If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present or are resolving, isolation must continue through day 10.
- If test result is negative but individual is still symptomatic,
  - Consider continuing self-isolation and retesting in 1-2 days if initially testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms.
  - Isolation can end if 24 hours have passed since fever resolution without use of fever reducing medication, and if symptoms are resolving.
  - Further individualized assessment for other potential diagnoses may be indicated to determine clearance.
- If test result is positive, follow isolation requirements from previous section.

<sup>3</sup> Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

## Asymptomatic Persons in **Non-High Risk<sup>6</sup>** Setting Who are Exposed<sup>4</sup> to Someone with COVID-19 (No Quarantine)

**Everyone<sup>5</sup>, regardless of vaccination status.**

### **Required Action:**

- Test within 3-5 days after last exposure.
- Contact SCIT Team to discuss referral for testing
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days, especially in indoor settings<sup>2</sup>.
- Strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.
- If symptoms develop, test, and stay home (see section on symptomatic persons).
- If test result is positive, follow isolation required actions.

<sup>4</sup> Exposure definition: A close contact is someone sharing the same indoor airspace, e.g., home, clinic waiting room, airplane etc., for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes) during an infected person's (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) infectious period.

- Exposed persons should self-monitor for symptoms for 10 days following last date of exposure, even if they complete self-quarantine earlier.
- Symptom self-monitoring should include checking temperature twice a day and watching for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms that can be attributed to COVID-19 for 10 days following last date of exposure.

<sup>5</sup> Persons infected within the prior 90 days do not need to be tested, quarantined, or excluded from work unless symptoms develop.

## Asymptomatic Persons in High Risk Settings<sup>6</sup> Who are Exposed<sup>4</sup> to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

**Unvaccinated; OR Incompletely vaccinated; OR  
Not infected with COVID-19 within the prior 90 days**

### Required Action:

- Exclude from work, stay home and quarantine for at least 5 days, after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Contact SCIT Team to discuss referral for testing
- Quarantine can end after day 5 if symptoms are not present **and** a diagnostic specimen collected on day 5 or later tests negative.
- If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present, quarantine must continue through day 10.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days, especially in indoor settings<sup>2</sup>.
- Strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.
- If symptoms develop, test, and stay home (see section on symptomatic persons).
- If test result is positive, follow isolation required actions.

<sup>6</sup> High Risk Settings include emergency shelters, cooling & heating centers, [healthcare centers](#) (not covered by [AFL 21.08.8](#)), local correctional facilities and detention centers, homeless shelters, Long-Term Care Settings & Adult and Senior Care Facilities and communal living/lodging.

## Asymptomatic Persons in High Risk Settings<sup>6</sup> Who are Exposed<sup>4</sup> to Someone with COVID-19 (No Quarantine)

**Boosted; OR Vaccinated, but not yet eligible for first booster<sup>7</sup>**

### Required Action:

- Test immediately upon notification of exposure, and at 3-5 days after last exposure.
- Contact SCIT Team to discuss referral for testing
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days, especially in indoor settings<sup>2</sup>.
- If symptoms develop, test, and stay home (see section on symptomatic persons).
- If test result is positive, follow isolation required actions.

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to [COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Q&A](#) for booster eligibility.

For more information about isolation and quarantine guidance, please visit:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Guidance-on-Isolation-and-Quarantine-for-COVID-19-Contact-Tracing.aspx>

For employer responsibilities under CalOSHA COVID Emergency Temporary Standards, please visit: [COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards - Fact Sheets, Model Written Program and Other Resources \(ca.gov\)](#).

In employer situations Cal OSHA ETS takes precedence and has requirements for post exposure management or return from isolation.