

# Protocol for Isolation and Quarantine (Work Restriction) for Non-Health Care Work Settings

Separate protocols for Healthcare Workers and First Responders.  
This protocol aligns with CDPH Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine.

## Persons Who Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolation)

Regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.

### Required action:

- Stay home for at least 5 days; after start of symptoms, or after date of first positive test if no symptoms.
- 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 without use of fever reducing medication.
- If symptoms, other than fever, are not resolving continue to isolate until symptoms are resolving or until after day 10.

<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.

## **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 test is negative, can return to work once symptoms have resolved.
- If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are no longer present or are resolving, isolation must continue through day 10.
- If test result is positive, follow isolation requirements above.

<sup>3</sup> Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or 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, and/or diarrhea.

**Asymptomatic Persons Who are Exposed<sup>4</sup> to Someone with COVID-19 - Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.**

**Work Exclusion is no longer required unless symptoms develop.**

**Recommended Action:**

- Test within 3-5 days after last exposure, even if without symptoms.
  - Per CDPH masking guidance, exposed persons should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings<sup>2</sup>
- If symptoms develop, test, and stay home.
- If test result is positive, follow isolation instructions above
- If symptomatic and unable to test or choosing not to test, quarantine (work exclusion) is recommended through day 10.
- Strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted.

*\* Persons infected within the prior 90 days do not need to be tested, quarantined, or excluded from work unless symptoms develop*

<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)

<sup>4</sup> **Exposure definition:** [Order of the State Public Health Officer Beyond Blueprint \(ca.gov\)](#)

- In indoor spaces 400,000 cubic feet per floor (e.g., home, clinic waiting room, airplane etc.), a close contact is someone sharing the same indoor airspace 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.
- In indoor spaces greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor (e.g., open-floor-plan offices, warehouses, large retail stores, manufacturing, or food processing facilities), a close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the infected person of 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
  - 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

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 information about 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.