

COVID IN THE WORKPLACE: WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE/SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF COVID?

Updated: December 18, 2020

Send the employee home and do not permit them to return to work until they meet certain criteria.

Any employee that is symptomatic or tested positive for COVID must be sent home immediately. Workers with symptomatic confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after the following criteria have been met:

- At least 24 hours have passed without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved; AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If the worker tested positive and never had symptoms, they must wait 10 days from the date of the positive test before returning to work.

Report Positive Cases to RIDOH

If your business has identified positive cases of COVID-19,

Please complete this [RIDOH COVID-19 Business Report Form](#) daily to help RIDOH better assist you in preventing rapid spread of disease and illness in your business and in the community.

This only applies to businesses with cases, and excludes healthcare facilities and congregate care sites.

Clean and Disinfect the facility

Employers should:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Clean and disinfect a sick worker's workspace. Wait 24 hours or, if 24 hours is not possible, as long as practical before you clean or disinfect.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the exposed area, if reasonable given food safety regulations.
- Collect information about the worker's contacts among co-workers for the period starting 2 days prior to symptom onset to identify other workers who could be considered exposed.

If a worker is confirmed infected, inform fellow workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The employer should instruct fellow workers.



This flyer is meant for informational purposes only. Please consult an attorney for information on how to implement this law.

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID?

An employee is considered to be exposed if they:

- Were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- Provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Shared eating/drinking utensils
- Were sneezed/coughed on or otherwise shared droplets

Employees that have been exposed should quarantine for 14 days regardless of whether they have tested negative. A negative COVID test does not change the need to quarantine.

If someone in the employee's home has tested positive, the employee must quarantine for:

- 10 days from the date of the last exposure, OR
- 7 days from the date of the last exposure if the employee receives a negative COVID test taken at least 5 days from the date of last exposure AND shows no symptoms

Other employees

Workers who have had limited exposure and remain asymptomatic may continue to work but employers should implement proactive screening practices.

Suggestions include:

- **Pre-Screen:** Measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the restaurant.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Even if the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor.
- **Wear a Mask:** All employees are required to wear a mask when it is not possible to social distance, unless it would endanger the individual's health to wear a mask.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean work spaces:** Clean and disinfect all common areas including, bathrooms and shared electronic equipment routinely.
- **Schedule an asymptomatic Covid test:** Employees can schedule free asymptomatic COVID testing at portal.ri.gov