

Cal/OSHA and CDPH Issue Clarifying Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine Requirements

Article By:

Sean Paisan

Sierra Vierra

At the end of the year, [California's Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) issued updated guidance regarding Isolation and Quarantine, which applied to workplaces](#) per the Governor's prior Executive Order. The timing of this guidance was rather awkward, as the Cal/OSHA Standards Board had recently approved [changes to the Cal/OSHA ETS](#) set to go into effect on January 14, 2022.

Since then, [Cal/OSHA has updated its FAQ pertaining to Isolation and Quarantine](#) to reflect the CDPH guidance. Thus, while [other amendments will go into effect for the ETS on January 14](#), Cal/OSHA's FAQ makes clear that employers should follow CDPH's exclusion and return-to-work requirements instead of the corresponding requirements in the ETS. Specifically, the FAQ states that "the new isolation and quarantine recommendations from CDPH replace the exclusion periods and return to work criteria in sections 3205(c)(9) and 3205(c)(10) of the ETS...."

The following sets forth the exclusion and return to work requirements per the Cal/OSHA FAQ:

Exclusion Requirements for Employees Who Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolation)

Requirements apply to **all** employees, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.

- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from the workplace for at least 5 days.
- Isolation can end and employees may return to the workplace after day 5 if symptoms are not present or are resolving, **and** a diagnostic specimen*

collected on day 5 or later tests negative.

- If an employee is unable or chooses not to test and their symptoms are not present or are resolving, isolation can end and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10.
- If an employee has a fever, isolation must continue and the employee may not return to work until the fever resolves.
- If an employee's symptoms other than fever are not resolving, they may not return to work until their symptoms are resolving **or** until after day 10 from the positive test.
- Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days after the positive test, especially in indoor settings. Please refer to the section in this FAQ on face coverings for additional face-covering requirements.

* Antigen test preferred.

Employees Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

Requirements apply to employees who are:

- Unvaccinated; **OR**

- Employees must be excluded from the workplace for at least 5 days after their last close contact with a

-
- Vaccinated and booster-eligible⁺ but have **not** yet received their booster dose.⁺⁺

⁺ Refer to CDC COVID-19 Booster Shots to determine who is booster eligible.

person who has COVID-19.

- Exposed employees must test on day 5.
- The quarantine can end and exposed employees may return to the workplace after day 5 if symptoms are not present **and** a diagnostic specimen^{*} collected on day 5 or later tests negative.
- If an employee is unable or chooses not to test and does not have symptoms, quarantine can end and the employee may return to the workplace after day 10.
- Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days after exposure, especially in indoor settings. Please refer to the section in this FAQ on face coverings for additional face-covering requirements.
- If an exposed employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must follow the isolation requirements above in Table 1.
- If an exposed employee develops symptoms, they must be excluded pending the results of a test.
- Employees are strongly encouraged

to get vaccinated or boosted.

⁺⁺Employers are not required to exclude asymptomatic employees in this category if:

- A negative diagnostic test* is obtained within 3-5 days after last exposure to a case;
- Employee wears a face-covering around others for a total of 10 days (please refer to the section in this FAQ on face coverings for additional face-covering requirements); and
- Employee continues to have no symptoms.

Employees Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (No Quarantine Required)

Requirements apply to employees who are:

Employees do not need to quarantine if:

- Boosted; OR
- Vaccinated, but not yet booster-eligible.*

* Refer to CDC COVID-19 Booster Shots to determine who is booster eligible.

- Test on day 5 with a negative result
- Wear face coverings around others for 10 days after exposure, especially in high-risk settings. Please refer to the section on **face coverings** for additional face-covering requirements.
- If employees test positive, they must follow isolation recommendations
- If employees develop symptoms, they must be excluded pending the results of a COVID-19 test

Jackson Lewis P.C. © 2025

National Law Review, Volume XII, Number 14

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/calosha-and-cdph-issue-clarifying-guidance-isolation-and-quarantine-requirements>