

Revised May 25, 2022

Dear Santa Clara County Employers,

Thank you for all that you do to help our community stay safe and recover economically. We truly appreciate all your efforts to modify your businesses, and everyday lives, to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and save lives.

*The guidance below does NOT apply to those living or working in congregate settings such as jails and shelters, nor to staff in any kind of healthcare facility. See [CDPH](#) for more information and refer to [CDPH guidance](#) for your facility type.*

*Employers must abide by the [Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards \(ETS\)](#) or the [Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\) Standard](#), whichever applies to their workplace. In the event of conflicting or additional requirements in the ETS or ATD, employers must comply with the applicable ETS or ATD requirements, and they should contact Cal/OSHA with any questions about those requirements.*

## Exclusion from Work

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), persons who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be instructed to stay at home and **must not** attend in-person work until they have tested negative for COVID-19 or, if they test positive, until they have completed their period of isolation (described below). If they do not get tested, they should isolate for 10 days after the day that their symptoms began.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 may provide documentation of their positive test result to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person work during their period of isolation. You must provide all sick leave and accommodations required by law when a person is required to isolate.

## Criteria for Returning to Work for non-Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Cases

**An individual who tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work if:**

- it has been at least 5 days since their symptoms started (or at least 5 days since the date of their positive COVID-19 test, if asymptomatic), AND
- if symptomatic, their symptoms have improved, AND
- at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- a COVID-19 test\* collected on Day 5 or later is negative

*\*When testing to end isolation, it is recommended to use an antigen test (often called a rapid test).*

If they are unwilling or unable to test on Day 5 or later, or if their Day 5 test is positive, they should continue to isolate through Day 10. Day 0 is the date of symptom onset (or date of first positive test, if asymptomatic). If fever is still present on Day 10 or other symptoms are not resolving, continue isolation until fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms are resolving.

CDPH strongly recommends wearing a mask around others through Day 10.

### **Guidelines for COVID-19 Close Contacts**

In general, staff who are [close contacts](#) to a COVID-19 case AND are asymptomatic may continue to go to work regardless of vaccination status, but they should get tested 3-5 days after exposure. They are also strongly recommended to wear a mask for 10 days whenever near others. If symptoms develop, they must isolate and test right away. Exceptions and other considerations may apply.

See the County's [COVID-19 Guidelines for the General Public](#) webpage for more information.

### **Medical Notes and Clearances**

Both the CDC and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (PHD) **discourage employers from requiring a medical note from a doctor or healthcare provider for clearance to return to work after an employee has COVID-19**. These notes create unnecessary hardships for employees and cause strain on the healthcare system to produce these notes. Employees are considered no longer contagious when they meet the criteria described above.

Your employee who had, or was a close contact of someone who had, COVID-19 may print this letter out to serve the purpose of 1) indicating the need to isolate (when coupled with symptoms and/or a positive test result) and 2) showing proof that they can return to work as long as they meet the criteria above (detailed further at [www.sccstayhome.org](http://www.sccstayhome.org)).

### **Additional Resources**

- General Santa Clara County Information for Home Isolation and Quarantine: <https://www.sccstayhome.org>
- What To Do When Someone at the Workplace Tests Positive for COVID-19: <https://covid19.sccgov.org/business-guidance#employee>
- General Santa Clara County Information for Employers: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/business-guidance.aspx>

**Thank you for all that you do to keep our community healthy.**