

Revised August 8, 2021

Dear Santa Clara County Employers:

Thank you for all that you are doing in these unprecedented times 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.

Exclusion from Work

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Santa Clara County policy, persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been identified as a close contact to a confirmed case during their infectious period will be instructed to stay at home for a period of time and **must not** attend in-person work.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 may provide written documentation of their positive laboratory test result and a copy of this letter to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person work during their period of isolation. Not all employees who test positive or are a close contact to a case may be able to provide a letter from a doctor or nurse. You are encouraged to provide access to sick leave, as well as telework, and other accommodations without individual documentation from a doctor or nurse upon disclosure from an employee that they have been instructed to isolate or quarantine.

Criteria for Returning to Work

An individual who had COVID-19 is considered no longer contagious and may return to work if:

- **it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started,**
- **their symptoms have improved,**
- **AND at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.**

If the individual never had symptoms and tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, they can return to work 10 days after their first positive test was collected.

If they were a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms of COVID-19, they may return to work if it has been at least 10 days since their last exposure to the positive case. For more details, please visit www.sccstayhome.org.

Individuals Who Have Been Fully Vaccinated If an individual completed their COVID-19 vaccine series and was a close contact to someone with COVID-19, they do NOT need to quarantine if they meet ALL the conditions listed below.

- Are fully vaccinated (2 weeks have passed after the last dose in the full series),

- Do not have symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure, (If an individual has COVID-19 symptoms, they should isolate and get tested immediately.)
- Are not an inpatient or resident in a healthcare setting or facility.

If an individual does not meet ALL of the above criteria, they should continue to follow current County quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

In addition, fully vaccinated people should be tested 3-5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. They should isolate if they test positive.

Medical Notes and Clearances

Both the CDC and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (PHD) **discourage employers from requiring a medical note for clearance to return to work after an individual 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.

Additionally, according to both the CDC and PHD, **employers should not request that individuals who were diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus provide proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests before allowing them to return to work.** Such requests for proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests after diagnosis with COVID-19 are unnecessary, delay return to work, and cause strain on testing availability for others who need to be tested. Employees are considered no longer contagious and may return to work 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 or quarantine when coupled with positive test result or verbal notification of exposure, 2) showing proof that they can return to work as long as they meet the criteria above (detailed further at www.sccstayhome.org), and/or 3) showing proof that employers should not request proof of a negative COVID-19 virus tests before return to work.

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.