

Quarantine is for individuals who have been exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive but are not exhibiting any symptoms and have not tested positive.

Isolation is for individuals who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (including fever, chills, , muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell) and have been told by a provider that they have, or probably have, COVID-19, even in the absence of a test.

<i>Worker Type</i>	<i>Quarantine when...</i>	<i>Isolate when...</i>	<i>End Isolation and Return to work when...</i>
Health Care Workers	Best practice: Quarantine at home when exposed to COVID-19 to prevent further transmission	You have tested positive for COVID-19; OR you have symptoms of COVID-19	<p><u>Symptomatic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and • Improvement in symptoms; and • At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared². <p><u>Asymptomatic</u></p> <p>At least 10 days have passed since the first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test was taken, assuming symptoms did not subsequently develop².</p>
First Responders	Certain sectors may continue to work during their quarantine period to preserve critical societal functions. This is only allowed if the worker remains asymptomatic		
Critical¹ Infrastructure Workers	All workers should wear PPE appropriate to their duties and must at least wear a cloth face covering and self-monitor for symptoms		
All Other Workers	Quarantine if you were exposed to COVID-19		

¹ CDC Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-infrastructure-sectors.html>

CDC List of Critical Infrastructure Workers:

[https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Version 3.0 CISA Guidance on Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers 1.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Version%203.0%20CISA%20Guidance%20on%20Essential%20Critical%20Infrastructure%20Workers%201.pdf)

² [For patients who are immunocompromised or those with serious COVID-19 illness or requiring hospitalization should wait until 20 days since first positive test and should consult with a provider](#)

Healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers may work following either occupational, household or community exposures, under certain circumstances. This exception applies only to work activities; and workers are strongly discouraged from leaving their home for leisure/recreational activities.

- Household or Community Exposure: Healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers who have a household or community exposure should be tested and have a negative result before returning to work.
- Travel: Healthcare workers, first responders and critical infrastructure workers should not be allowed to work during quarantine related to travel. Under these circumstances, employees should be required to meet the requirements set forth in the travel order.

†[Critical infrastructure workers](#) conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continued critical infrastructure viability. It is best practice that anyone who is exposed to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, quarantine and not leave the house during the quarantine period. However, in accordance with CDC, DPH recommends that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue working while under quarantine following an occupational exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19, **under certain circumstances and ONLY when necessary to preserve critical functions necessary to support society.**

This guidance applies only to critical infrastructure workers and who have had exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, but are **not experiencing [symptoms](#)** and have **not tested positive for SARS-CoV-2**. Note that the designation of an individual as a critical infrastructure worker is not applicable to other considerations, such as vaccine distribution. Separate guidance is available for healthcare personnel and first responders.

Workplaces operating under Sector-Specific Standards must still follow those standards to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Critical infrastructure workers who are symptomatic

All exposed individuals who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should immediately separate themselves from others, inform their established point of contact at their workplace (e.g., supervisor or occupational health program), leave the workplace, and arrange for medical evaluation and testing. **Workers who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or who test positive for COVID-19, are required to self-isolate and may not work.**

Critical infrastructure workers who are not symptomatic

Employers, in consultation with Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC), Local Public Health or the Department of Public Health, may consider allowing exposed but asymptomatic critical infrastructure workers to continue to work during quarantine in select instances when it is **necessary to preserve the essential functions of critical infrastructure**. **This option should be used as a last resort and only in limited circumstances**. In such instances:

- Employers are encouraged to work with public health officials in managing the continued work in a way that best protects the health of their workers and the public.
- Critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic and have not tested positive. Workers being allowed to work during quarantine must always wear a facemask or cloth face covering when at the worksite.
- Additionally, the following risk mitigation precautions should be implemented prior to and during the work shift:
 - **Pre-Screen:** Quarantined workers planning to enter the workplace must self-screen at home prior to coming onsite. They should not attempt to enter the workplace if any of the following are present: symptoms of COVID-19; temperature equal to or higher than 100.0 °F¹; or are waiting for the results of a viral test.
 - **Screen at the workplace:** Employers should conduct an on-site symptom assessment, including temperature screening, prior to each work shift. Ideally, screening should happen before the individual enters the facility.
 - **Regularly monitor:** If the quarantined worker doesn't have a fever or other symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program or their workplace COVID-19 coordinator or team.
- Routine risk mitigation practices which should be used by all employees include:
 - **Wear a cloth face covering:** Ensure employees wear a cloth face covering in accordance with CDC, OSHA, state and local requirements
 - **Social Distance:** Employees should stay at least 6 feet apart from others and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
 - **Clean and disinfect workspaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared equipment routinely.

- **Hand hygiene**

Options for Shortened Strict Quarantine Period:

COVID-19 infection may occur after an incubation period for COVID-19 of up to 14 days after exposure, however, the majority of cases have incubation periods of fewer than 10 days. Based on observational and published data, and recent modeling work conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if shortened quarantine periods result in increased compliance with contact tracing and adherence to quarantine recommendations, the small risk that someone may develop COVID-19 after a shortened strict quarantine period is outweighed by the expected benefit of reduced transmission from the increased cooperation.

Healthcare facilities including long-term care facilities, may have additional risks. Quarantine periods for patients, residents or staff in healthcare facilities should adhere to healthcare-specific guidance and any reductions only be instituted after careful consideration of risks.

OPTIONS	CRITERIA	ACTIVE MONITORING	RESIDUAL RISK
7 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 8 after last exposure IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A test (either PCR or antigen) taken on Day 5 or later is negative; AND • The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND • The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14 	Individual must actively monitor symptoms and take temperature once daily. IF even mild symptoms develop or the individual has a temperature of 100.0 F, they must immediately self-isolate, contact the public health authority overseeing their quarantine and get tested.	Approximately 5% residual risk of disease development
10 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 11 after last exposure IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND • The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14. • No test is necessary under this option 		Approximately 1% residual risk of disease development
14 days of strict quarantine	<p><u>Release on Day 15 after last exposure IF:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual has experienced ANY symptoms during the quarantine period EVEN if they have a negative COVID-19 test; OR • The individual indicates they are unwilling or unable to conduct active monitoring. 	No additional active monitoring required	Maximal risk reduction

*Massachusetts COVID-19 COMMAND CENTER
Exposure & Return to Work Guidance, Revised December 07, 2020*

More information about options to reduce quarantine time periods is available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)