



NKYHEALTH

NORTHERN KENTUCKY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

WHEN YOU HAVE A CASE

What can you expect if an employee is laboratory-confirmed with COVID-19?

For all laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, the Northern Kentucky Health Department will contact the ill employee to interview them about symptoms and personal and professional contacts.

- **Report positive COVID-19 employee cases to the Northern Kentucky Health Department so that control measures can be reviewed and/or implemented. Call 859-363-2070 or visit <https://nkyhealth.org/individual-or-family/health-alerts/coronavirus/what-to-do/> to report a case. In many cases, the business hears about the case first, because the individual who is positive is notified before the local health department receives the lab report. There can be a several day lag before the local health department is notified.**
- Employers must be prepared to assist public health officials if an employee tests positive or becomes exposed to COVID-19. Public health officials may make recommendations for contacts of the infected person to stay at home (self-quarantine) for 14 days, with options to end quarantine early.
- Please be prepared to answer the following questions about an employee who tested positive:
 1. What were the individual's symptoms and when did the symptoms first appear?
 2. What was the last day that the employee came into work?
 3. What was the employee's schedule two days prior to the date the employee first had a symptom of COVID-19? Where did the employee work and what were the employee's specific job responsibilities in the days prior to the last day at work before the employee tested positive?
 4. Who would have come in close contact with the employee in the two days prior to the date the employee first had a symptom of COVID-19?
 5. Consider employees who were within six feet of the individual for more than fifteen minutes working, sitting in the same room or meetings, interacting during breaks, etc.
 6. Consider customers, clients, vendors or visitors who may have interacted with the employee within six feet of the individual for more than 15 minutes.
 7. Close contacts are those who fit the above criteria whether masked or unmasked, and whether they have been vaccinated or not vaccinated.
 8. Be prepared to provide contact information for the employee who tested positive and anyone who may have come into close contact with that employee.
- NKY Health will provide a letter to the business to distribute to all identified close contacts indicating next steps including quarantine directions for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the positive case, with options to end quarantine early.
- NKY Health will discuss with the worksite the appropriate sector guidance or Healthy at School guidelines and identify any potential areas to increase disinfection, social distancing, PPE, handwashing and next steps.

When can an ill employee return to work?

- Individuals with either laboratory-confirmed or clinically suspected COVID-19 who have mild to moderate, symptomatic COVID-19 should be excluded from work and/or remain in isolation until all three of the following criteria are met:
 1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **AND**
 2. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
 3. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
- Individuals with laboratory-confirmed or clinically suspected COVID-19 with severe or critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised, should be excluded from work and/or remain in isolation until all three of the following criteria are met:
 1. At least 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **AND**
 2. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
 3. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
- Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had symptoms and are not severely immunocompromised, should be excluded from work and/or remain in isolation until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 viral diagnostic test (i.e., date the sample was obtained from patient, not reported by lab). They can return to work on day 11.

- Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had symptoms and are severely immunocompromised, should be excluded from work and/or remain in isolation until 20 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 viral diagnostic test. They can return to work on day 21.
- Return to work notes should not be required as healthcare providers are very busy and cannot provide the notes.
- A negative test should not be required to return to work because testing priorities and capacity are not able to support this initiative. The only exceptions to this are for specific sectors of health care agencies.
- After returning to work, employees should:
 1. Wear a facemask for source control at work at all times when in proximity to others and in confined spaces with others (including break areas), until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer. After this time period and for the duration of this pandemic, employees should revert to the universal source control policy at their facility while at work.
 2. Be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised people (e.g., coworkers, public) until symptoms completely resolve or 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
 3. Self-monitor for signs and symptoms of illness and seek re-evaluation from occupational health or their healthcare provider if fever and/or respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

What if an employee is exposed to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19?

- Develop a contingency plan for operations if an outbreak occurs in a community. Consider if the business can continue to run if a significant number of employees, supplies, etc., cannot come or be delivered to your business because they or a family member are ill.
- Communicate the plan to employees and make sure they are aware of what to do.
- Employees who have been in close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 should quarantine for 14 days from the last exposure to the person, but there are options to end quarantine early. Close contact is defined as within 6 feet of the individual who is positive for 15 minutes or more (unless exposure occurred in a health care setting) and those who live in the same household.
- There are three different ways close contacts can quarantine as long as they have NO symptoms:
 1. Quarantine for 14 days; especially if they are going to be around people that are high-risk for the virus: elderly, people with comorbidities, immunocompromised (Recommended)
 2. Quarantine for 10 days if they have NO symptoms
 3. Quarantine for 7 days if they have a negative COVID-19 test on or after Day 5 and have NO symptoms.

If they end quarantine before the 14-day quarantine recommendation, they must socially distance from others, wash hands or use sanitizer, wear a face mask and continue cleaning. Regardless of how long they quarantine, they must carefully watch for any symptoms that may develop for the 14 days after the exposure. If they develop symptoms at any time during the 14 days after exposure, they will need to immediately isolate and seek medical advice regarding next steps and testing.

- If an employee lives in the same house as someone diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee quarantines while the household member is recovering, AND for 14 days from the day the household member is considered recovered, with options to end quarantine early (see previous page - the first bullet that describes the 3 criteria for when an individual who is positive is considered recovered under the section entitled [When can an ill employee return to work?](#)).
- Close contacts may have been provided a letter by a public health agency that indicates they have been identified as a close contact with directions about what to do.
- Retesting for a negative test result is not recommended as a criteria for returning to work.

Contingency Operation Plan

- Develop a contingency plan for operations if an outbreak occurs in a community where your business operates. Consider how your business can continue to run if a significant number of employees, contractors, supplies, etc., cannot come to your place of business because they or a family member are ill.
- Communicate the plan to the employees and contractors on the plan and make sure they are aware of what to do.



Do These Guidelines Apply to People who have been vaccinated?

If someone has been fully vaccinated and has an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, they are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- It has been 2 weeks or more since they were fully vaccinated (they received the 2nd dose in a 2-dose series or 1 dose of a single-dose vaccine)
- They have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

If they do not meet all of the above criteria, they should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. This guidance does not apply to vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings. These individuals should continue to quarantine following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

For Healthy at Work guidance from the Governor's Office, please visit
<https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work>

