

COVID-19 Recommendations for Business and Industry

6/30/2021

The most important actions that employers can take to minimize spread of COVID-19 in the workplace include: daily health screening for both employees and visitors; supporting testing of symptomatic employees; adopting physical and operational changes to accommodate distancing; providing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); adequate cleaning and disinfection of common areas; and encouraging and facilitating COVID-19 vaccination.

For more information on preventing and responding to COVID-19 in the workplace, refer to [Center for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html) (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html).

Guidance for employers when an employee is tested for COVID-19

- When daily COVID-19 health screening identifies an employee with symptoms, or they call in sick, the employee should contact their health care provider and get tested for COVID-19. The employee should then stay isolated at home and away from others until test results are available.
- **The employee who tests negative:**
 - May return to work when symptoms improve.
- **The employee who tests positive for COVID-19 can return when return-to-work (RTW) criteria are met:**
 - **Symptomatic** employees should stay isolated at home and away from others until all three of these are true:
 - Symptoms have improved; AND
 - It has been 10 days since symptoms started; AND
 - They have been fever-free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications)
 - **Asymptomatic** employees who test positive after travel, an exposure, or routine surveillance testing should isolate at home for 10 days from their test date.
 - No medical exam or additional testing is necessary to clear employees for work once they meet the RTW criteria.

Guidance for employers when an employee tests positive for COVID-19

Workplace contact tracing

- **Contact tracing.** The purpose of contact tracing is to limit disease spread by identifying co-workers who have been exposed to an infectious employee and excluding them from the workplace. The exposed workers are called “contacts” and they should “quarantine” away from others, generally at home. Contact tracing should be conducted in a way that protects privacy of an employee with COVID-19.
- **Contact** is defined as spending a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more within 6 feet of an infectious person, unless there was a physical barrier between them, such as a cubicle wall or full Plexiglas screen, or all people were using a face covering and face shield.
- **Infectious period.** People with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others two days before they show symptoms until 10 days after their first symptoms (this is termed the infectious period). Therefore, contact tracing should identify co-workers who were exposed during that timeframe. For workers without symptoms, the time frame is two days before their test date until 10 days afterwards.
- **Quarantine exemptions.** There are two exemptions to quarantine after exposure:
 - If it has been at least 14 days since completion of a vaccination series and the employee does not currently have symptoms of COVID-19, they do not need to quarantine.
 - If the employee has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and does not currently have symptoms of COVID-19, they do not need to quarantine.
- **Workplace case clusters.** When multiple employees test positive for COVID-19 within two weeks *and* workplace contact tracing indicates that the virus may be spreading in the workplace, contact MDH about a workplace COVID-19 case cluster at health.criticalinfrastructure@state.mn.us.

Quarantine of exposed employees

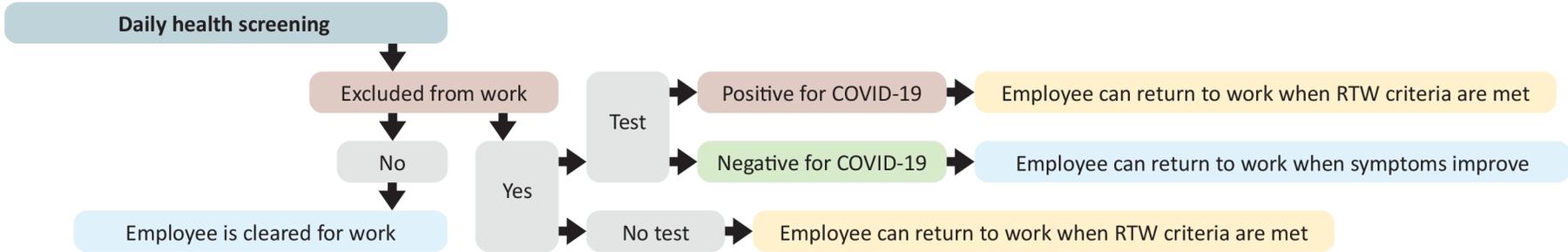
- MDH recommends a standard quarantine period of 14 days after contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (returning to work on day 15). However, for businesses facing staffing shortages, one of the following alternative quarantine strategies may be adopted:
 - **Strategy 1:** Employees quarantine at home for a **minimum** of 10 days and get tested on day seven. If the COVID-19 test is negative and the employee does not have symptoms, they may return to work on day 11. This is the preferred strategy.
 - **Strategy 2:** Employees quarantine at home for a **minimum** of seven days and get tested on day five. If the COVID-19 test is negative and the employee does not have symptoms, they may return to work on day eight.
 - **Strategy 3:** Employees quarantine at home for 10 days. If the employee does not have symptoms, they may return to work on day 11 without testing.
- If symptoms of COVID-19 develop during quarantine, the employee should be tested immediately.
 - If an employee under quarantine tests positive, they should remain isolated at home and away from others until return-to-work (RTW) criteria have been met.
 - If an employee under quarantine tests negative, and symptoms have resolved, they may return to work when the quarantine has been completed. If symptoms persist, the employee should contact their health care provider.



Minnesota Department of Health | health.mn.gov | 651-201-5000
 625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.

COVID-19 Decision Tree: Recommendations for Business and Industry



Contact is defined as spending a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more interacting within 6 feet of an infectious person, unless there was a physical barrier between them such as a cubicle wall or full Plexiglas screen, or a face covering and face shield.

RETURN TO WORK (RTW) CRITERIA AFTER A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST RESULT

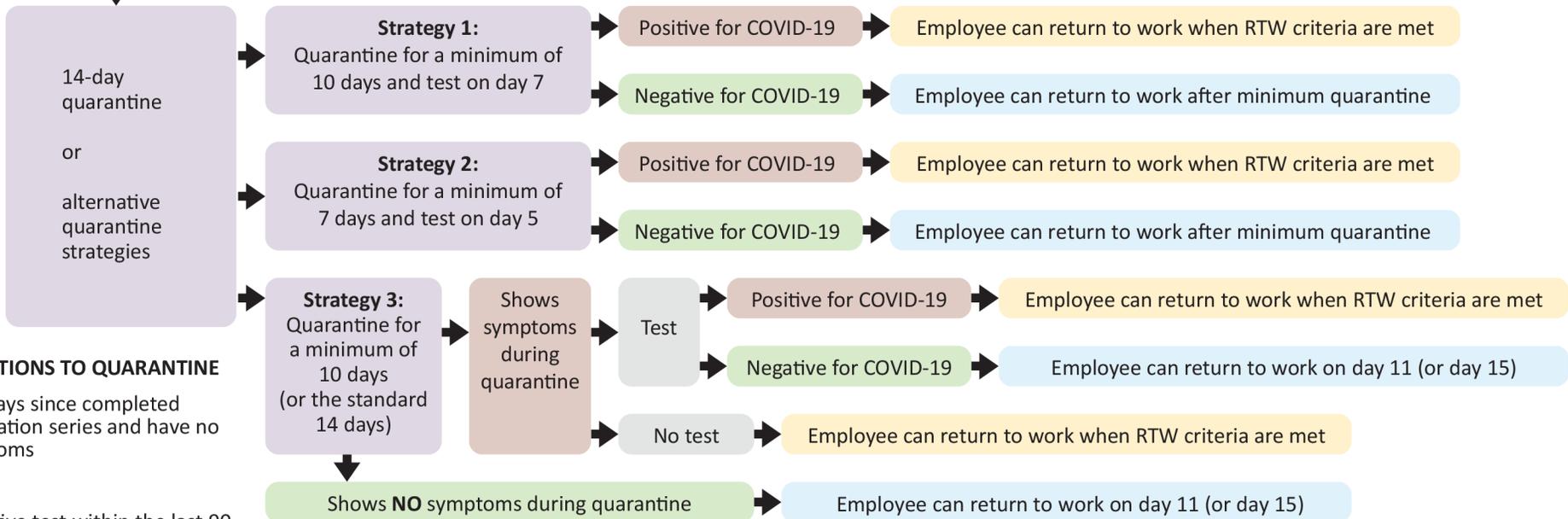
Symptomatic employees may return to work when all three are met:

- Symptoms have improved
- 10 days since symptoms started
- Fever-free in the last for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications)

Asymptomatic employees may return to work 10 days after the positive test.

No medical exam or additional testing is necessary to clear employees once they once they meet the RTW criteria.

Contact with COVID-19 positive person



EXCEPTIONS TO QUARANTINE

- 14 days since completed vaccination series and have no symptoms

OR

- Positive test within the last 90 days and have no symptoms

IF EMPLOYEES HAVE SYMPTOMS OR AN EXPOSURE, THEY SHOULD STAY ISOLATED AT HOME UNTIL TEST RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE