

Employees with Possible Exposure to COVID-19:

COVID-19 Response Resource Center: Timely Counsel for your Business

By Natalie Sanders and Jessica Thaller-Moran on 04.09.2020

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An employee may have been exposed to COVID-19. What do you do?

This question is becoming more common for essential businesses that continue to operate during quarantines. On April 8, the CDC issued a new Interim Guidance explaining how to keep essential employees working following potential exposure to COVID-19. They also provide a printable flyer for the workplace.

The new guidance permits employees with possible exposure to return to work provided they are (1) asymptomatic and (2) take the following additional precautions:

- The employer should measure the employee's temperature and assess their symptoms prior to the employee starting work. The CDC notes that this temperature check would ideally take place before the employee enters the facility.
- The employee should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 under the supervision of the employer's occupational health program.
- The employee should wear a mask at all times in the workplace for 14 days after the last exposure. In the event of supply shortages, the employer may approve an employee-supplied cloth face covering.
- The employee should practice social distancing as work duties permit. This includes keeping a 6-foot barrier between themselves and other employees.
- The employer should increase the frequency with which they clean and disinfect shared work surfaces.

The CDC reiterates that if the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately, and workplace surfaces promptly cleaned and disinfected. (The CDC provides specific disinfecting guidance for the workplace([link is external](#))).

The employer should also compile information regarding any person who had contact with the sick person for two days before the employee became symptomatic, and any employee who came within six feet of the sick employee would be considered exposed.

Employees with Possible Exposure to COVID-19: New CDC Guidance

While the CDC frames this interim guidance as a means to ensure continuity of operations, employers should be cognizant of their obligations under applicable laws, including the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. Employers should take care not to violate those obligations in applying this interim guidance.

If you have any questions about the new CDC guidance, please contact Natalie Sanders or Jessi Thaller-Moran, linked below.

Brooks Pierce is dedicated to keeping our clients fully informed during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information, please visit our [COVID-19 Response Resources](#) page.

Tags: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)