Can You Require an Employee Exhibiting COVID-19 Symptoms to Self-Isolate for 14-days?

Having COVID-19 symptoms is enough to send employees home for the day but not for 14 days.

QUESTION

Can we require an employee who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms to self-isolate for 14 days even though she wasn't tested for COVID-19?

ANSWER

No. Under current public health guidelines, symptoms are not enough; you need a positive test or other confirmation of infection to make an employee go into self-isolation.

EXPLANATION

What you can and should do is require the employee to go home and strongly urge her to get tested right away. Technically, you can't require her to get tested. However, if she shows up the next day and still has symptoms, you can again send her home and advise her to get tested. And do the same thing the next day and the day after that and so on until either one of 2 things happen:

- The symptoms resolve; or
- She tests positive, in which case, you can require her to go into self-isolation.