

COVID-19: CDC Guidance on Returning to Work



The spread of COVID-19 is impacting employers across the country. For workforces not able to work remotely, employers are asking how they should address workers who exhibit symptoms or have a confirmed case of the disease.

With the number of positive cases of the virus continuing to rise, what steps should you take if one of your workers has COVID-19, and when should they be allowed to return to work? The CDC offers guidance on prudent timelines for different scenarios.

For instance, according to CDC, if an employee has a fever and a cough, but then gets better without COVID-19 testing or medical care, they would be allowed to return to work under the following conditions:

- Three days have passed since their recovery, which means their fever is resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication and their respiratory symptoms have improved; and
- At least seven days have passed since they first experienced symptoms

Another case could be an employee who is medically confirmed to have COVID-19 and is showing symptoms. In this instance, the worker would be allowed to return to work if:

- Their fever has been resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications;
- Their respiratory symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath); and
- They have had two negative COVID-19 tests

For employees who have a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19, but are not showing any symptoms, CDC currently says they may return to work:

- After at least seven days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test; and

- They have had no subsequent illness