

# CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



## COVID-19: Return-to-Work Procedures

(Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Members who experience a **high-risk exposure** should notify their department in accordance with their exposure control plan and be placed in quarantine for 14 days and get a COVID-19 test if you show signs and symptoms. If asymptomatic for 14 days, you are eligible to return to work. If members test positive, they should be isolated and follow the guidance below for returning to work.

**If you are currently in isolation due to signs/symptoms of the COVID-19 virus (fever, cough, shortness of breath) AND/OR have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus**

The CDC updated their **duration of isolation and precautions** guidance based on available data. They indicate that persons with mild to moderate COVID-19 may remain infectious up to 10 days after symptom onset. Persons with more severe to critical illness or severe immunocompromise may remain infectious up to 20 days after symptom onset. Based on these findings, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions, unless if the individual is immunocompromised.

**You may be cleared to return to work based on the following guidelines:**

**1. Persons with COVID-19 illness**, isolation and precautions can generally be discontinued:

- 10 days *after symptom onset*<sup>1</sup>
- resolution of fever for at least 72 hours,\* without the use of fever-reducing medications,
- and with improvement of other symptoms.

Limited individuals with severe illness may produce the virus beyond 10 days, and that may warrant extending duration of isolation and precautions for up to 20 days after symptom onset; consider consultation with infection control experts.

**2. For persons who never develop symptoms**, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days *after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA*.

Serologic testing should not be used to establish the presence or absence of SARS-CoV-2 infection and the results should not be used to determine if someone should discontinue isolation or precautions.

Sources: 1. CDC Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Interim Guidance). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.htm>.

\* The IAFF continues to take a conservative approach and prioritize our members' health and safety with the goal to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19 among members. As it relates to return-to-work practices, the CDC recommends a 24-hour fever-free interval (without fever-reducing medications) before returning to work, while the IAFF recommends a 72-hour fever-free interval (without fever-reducing medications). This recommendation has been reviewed with input from medical professionals. There is no clear evidence that warrants a change to a shorter time interval. As the research on COVID-19 continues to evolve, we continue to assess and make changes to our recommendations as appropriate.