



State of New Hampshire

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COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY All Employees Q&A

Protocols on Returning to Work if Sick or Exposed to the COVID-19 Virus

Prepared in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health Services

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The following Q&A provides updated information on questions being asked by employees. It may replace information provided in previous Q&As, so please read the information carefully. Due to the continuously evolving nature of information related to the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the information provided in this guideline is subject to change as circumstances change.

DISCLAIMER: This guidance does not pertain to employees working in 24/7 healthcare facilities.

The following protocols pertain to employees under the following circumstances:

Category 1

Who: Employees who are sick with fever, respiratory illness, or mild flu-like symptoms; or employees who have a Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Test

a. What should I do if I'm sick and when can I return to work?

You should:

- Stay home and limit contact with other people (self-isolate)
- Inform your supervisor by phone
- Call ahead before visiting your healthcare provider if medical evaluation is needed
- Review the following CDC guidance:
 - [Caring for yourself at home](#)
 - [Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in homes](#)
 - [Cleaning and disinfection guidance](#)
- Self-isolate at home (no going out of house or to work) until:
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared,
AND

- At least 72 hours (3 days) have passed since recovery – which is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms.

b. If you work in a healthcare setting and are returning to work after confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection:

You should:

- Follow CDC’s criteria for return to work for healthcare personnel, which include the above “7/72” criteria PLUS:
 - Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
 - Be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.
 - Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette in CDC’s interim infection control guidance (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
 - Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen

Category 2

Who: Asymptomatic individuals (people without symptoms) with direct contact* with a Category 1 person

a. *What should I do, and when can I return to work, if I am:*

- *Sharing a home with or caring for a Category 1 person?*
- *In direct contact (within 6 feet) with a Category 1 person, including a co-worker?*

You should:

- Stay home (self-quarantine)
- Inform your supervisor by phone
- Work from home if the option is available
- Review the following guidance from NH DHHS
 - [COVID-19 Self-Quarantine Guide:](https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf)
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf>
- Monitor for symptoms of fever, respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose), and any flu-like symptoms (e.g., fatigue, chills, muscle aches)
- If you develop any symptoms while on self-quarantine, you must follow the instructions above (Category 1 instructions)
- You may return to work after 14 days from last day of exposure to the individual, if no symptoms have developed

*Direct contact means within six feet

Category 3

Who: Asymptomatic individuals (people without symptoms) with high risk of exposure from travel

- a. *What should I do, and when can I return to work, if I have engaged in any out of state travel by plane, train, or bus; am returning from New York City by any means of transportation; or if I have attended any large group/business gatherings in other states?*

You should:

- Stay home (self-quarantine)
- Inform your supervisor by phone
- Work from home if the option is available
- Review the following guidance from NH DHHS
 - [COVID-19 Self-Quarantine Guide:](https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf)
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf>
- Monitor for symptoms of fever, respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose), and any flu-like symptoms (e.g., fatigue, chills, muscle aches)
- If you develop any symptoms while on self-quarantine, you must follow the instructions above (Category 1 instructions)
- You may return to work after 14 days from last day of exposure, if no symptoms have developed

Category 4

Who: Asymptomatic individuals (people without symptoms) with other low-risk contacts

- a. *What should I do, and when can I return to work, if I live, work, or closely associate with:*

- *An asymptomatic individual who has had direct contact with a Category 1 person?*
- *An asymptomatic individual who has engaged in any out of state travel by plane, train, or bus?*

OR

- b. *What should I do, and when can I return to work, if I have shared a large space with a Category 1 person (e.g. same work building but not same room, same large hall or meeting space), but was not in close direct contact with the person?*

You should:

- As long as you do not have symptoms, there are no restrictions on your ability to work
- Review the following NH DHHS guidance:
 - [COVID-19 Self-Observation Guide:](https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-observation-covid.pdf)
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/residents/documents/self-observation-covid.pdf>

- Monitor for symptoms of fever, respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose), and any flu-like symptoms (e.g., fatigue, chills, muscle aches)
- If you develop any symptoms, you must follow the instructions above (Category 1 instructions)
- Continue to always perform frequent hand hygiene and social distancing – always maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and other people.