

## NH COVID-19 Employer Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance

March 16, 2021

Spread of COVID-19 can occur in workplaces and cause significant impact on employees and business operations. Even a single person can introduce COVID-19 into a workplace and lead to multiple other people needing to quarantine at home, which can significantly impact business operations. Businesses and employers can prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace by implementing recommended public health COVID-19 mitigation guidance. One important layer of protection to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into the workplace is effective employee screening to exclude people who have any new or unexplained [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or risk factors for exposure, including travel (see also NH DPHS' general [Travel Guidance](#)).

### Travel Guidance for Employers

Many areas of the world, including within the United States, have high levels of COVID-19 which increases a person's risk of COVID-19 for those who live in, or travel to these higher transmission areas. There are also new [variants of concern](#) that have emerged which are more infectious and easily spread. Different types of travel and activities (e.g., travel on public transportation, travel on cruise ships, interaction with large groups of people, etc.) increase a person's risk of COVID-19 exposure, regardless of the ultimate destination. Therefore, employers should take the following steps in order to minimize the risk of an employee being exposed to COVID-19 and subsequently introducing the novel coronavirus into the workplace:

- Do not allow non-essential international and domestic business travel, especially travel that involves larger group activities and interactions (e.g., conferences, meetings)
- Discourage personal international travel
- Discourage travel on cruise ships
- Discourage people from attending larger group gatherings where unrelated individuals, or people who are not immediate close household contacts of each other, are gathering indoors and in close contact with one another

### Employee Illness and Risk Screening

- Facilities and businesses should ask screening questions to assess risk for COVID-19 every day before an employee is allowed to work:
  1. Do you have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher that are new for you? Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:
    - Fever, or feeling feverish;
    - Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath;
    - General body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue;
    - Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, and
    - Changes in a person's sense of taste or smell.
  2. Have you had close contact with someone in the prior 10 days who has tested positive for COVID-19? (Note: healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment should answer "no" because they are not considered to have exposure)

3. Have you traveled in the prior 10 days internationally (outside of the U.S., except for essential travel to/from Canada\*) or on a cruise ship?

\*Essential travel to/from Canada includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, or parental shared custody. Essential travel also includes travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays.

### Employees with Symptoms of COVID-19 Should Stay Home and be Evaluated for COVID-19 Testing (regardless of prior infection or COVID-19 vaccination status)

Persons with any new or unexplained [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (even if only mild symptoms) should **not** be allowed into the facility. Symptomatic persons should be instructed to contact their health care provider to be evaluated for testing for COVID-19 and must [self-isolate](#) at home; this includes people who are previously vaccinated against COVID-19 or who had prior COVID-19. For people who do not have a primary care provider, or for whom a primary care provider does not/cannot test the person, the individual should seek COVID-19 testing at one of the many [testing locations around NH](#).

A person with symptoms of COVID-19 can be allowed back to work if they meet criteria **A, B, or C**:

- A.** The person tests negative for COVID-19 with an appropriate test to detect active infection. Such persons can be allowed back to work when they are fever-free for at least 24 hours off fever-reducing medication with other symptoms improving as long as they have no risk factor for COVID-19 exposure that would require them to complete a period of quarantine even after testing negative (see quarantine guidance and “exceptions to quarantine requirements” below).
- B.** The person has immunity/protection against COVID-19 from being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (i.e., person is 14 days or more beyond completion of COVID-19 vaccine) or from recently being diagnosed with COVID-19 in the prior 90 days, and their healthcare provider has assessed their symptoms and determined they do not require testing for COVID-19 because of being low-risk for COVID-19 (based on symptoms and assessment of potential COVID-19 exposures). Such persons can be allowed back to work when they are fever-free for at least 24 hours off fever-reducing medication and other symptoms are improving.
- C.** The person has met CDC criteria for [discontinuation of isolation](#) (which applies to people who test positive for COVID-19, or for symptomatic people who are not tested but don’t have immunity/protection from vaccination or prior infection, as described above).

### Employees with Risk Factors for COVID-19 Exposure Should Stay Home and “Quarantine”

Persons who report close contact to someone with COVID-19, or those reporting travel risk factors (as outlined above in the screening questions) should **not** be allowed into the facility, and they should be instructed to [self-quarantine](#) at home unless exceptions below apply.

A person can be allowed back to work when at least 10 days have passed from their last exposure to a person infectious with COVID-19, or return from international or cruise ship travel. Businesses and organizations serving vulnerable populations in congregate living settings that are high-risk for transmission (e.g., long-term care facilities, jails/prisons, etc.) are recommended to require 14 day quarantine for residents and staff to minimize risk of

transmission within facilities and to minimize impact on vulnerable populations. In circumstances where an employer has more strict quarantine policies (i.e., requires a 14 day quarantine), staff should follow employer policies.

People required to quarantine due to international travel or travel on a cruise ship have the option of shortening their travel-related quarantine by getting a test on day 6-7 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection (SARS-CoV-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19); this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test). Antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. If the test is obtained on day 6-7 of quarantine (i.e., within 48 hours before ending quarantine after day 7), the person is asymptomatic, and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine after 7 days, but they must still [self-observe](#) for symptoms of COVID-19 and adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a [well-fitted face mask](#), practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.) for a full 14 days after their last day of travel. Any new [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine). This 7-day quarantine “test out” option ONLY applies to travel-related quarantine (not quarantine due to a high-risk close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19).

People who are identified as close contacts to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 must quarantine for at least 10 days and should themselves be tested, but testing for COVID-19 does not allow a person identified as a “close contact” to be released early from their 10 day quarantine; testing is only for the purpose of early identification of infection so that public health can perform contact tracing to identify additional people potentially at risk for COVID-19. Any person with an identified exposure who ends quarantine after 10 days must still monitor themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19 and adhere to all recommended COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a [well-fitted face mask](#), practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.) for a full 14 days after their last potential exposure. Any new [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine).

### Exceptions to Quarantine Requirements

The following people do NOT need to quarantine after close contact to a person with COVID-19 or after international or cruise ship travel:

1. Persons who are 14 days or more beyond completion of COVID-19 vaccination – this means a person must be at least 14 days beyond receipt of the second dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or at least 14 days beyond receipt of the single-dose Janssen (Jonson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine.
2. Persons who are within 90 days of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that was diagnosed by PCR or antigen testing (if a person had a previous infection that was more than 90 days prior, then they are still subject to quarantine).

Such persons, however, still need to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, always wear a [well-fitted face mask](#) when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene. All infection control and other business COVID-19 mitigation guidance must be followed. For health care workers, this includes continuing to use all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when evaluating or treating patients (including patients with suspect or confirmed COVID-19).

Additional exceptions can be made for employees who work in a [critical infrastructure sector](#) (see also [CISA memo](#)) **AND** is deemed essential to the functioning of the business (“essential worker”). Essential workers may be permitted to work during their quarantine period if all of the following criteria are met:

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- The employee is not exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
- The employee is not a household contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- The employee is deemed essential to the functioning of the business and substantial business impact would be experienced if the employee does not work in person;
- The employee cannot conduct essential functions remotely;
- There is no replacement personnel for the employee;
- The employee self-quarantines for all other purposes other than reporting to work;
- The employee wears a [well-fitted face mask](#), maintains at least 6 feet of separation from other employees and customers, and participates in daily health screening while at work.

An additional option for a critical infrastructure business experiencing significant staff shortages due to employees being out on quarantine resulting in inability to maintain operations, the business may also choose to implement SARS-CoV-2 molecular testing for essential employees to end quarantine after day 7 if all the following apply:

- An [appropriate respiratory specimen](#) is collected on days 6-7 of quarantine (i.e., within 48 hours before ending quarantine after day 7)
- The specimen is tested for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus by a molecular test (e.g., a PCR-based test) and is negative; antigen testing is not acceptable for this purpose
- The person remains asymptomatic
- The person conducts daily self-monitoring for symptoms for a full 14 days after last potential exposure
- The person strictly adheres to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wears a [well-fitted face mask](#), practices frequent hand hygiene, etc.) for a full 14 days after last potential exposure
- If the person develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately isolate and seek out testing for COVID-19, even if that person has previously or recently tested negative

Specialized or technical workers who must come to New Hampshire from other international locations to support critical infrastructure businesses are permitted to stay overnight in New Hampshire hotels without quarantining prior to arrival. They must follow the other guidance above pertaining to mask wearing and social distancing while at work and in public settings (e.g., transiting through their hotel, getting take-out food, etc.), and they must quarantine and stay out of public settings when not working.

Healthcare workers and employers should follow CDC's healthcare worker-specific [guidance](#), and should refer to NH DPHS guidance on [Criteria for Return to Work and Crisis Staffing in Long Term Care Facilities and Other Health Care Settings](#), which can be applied to healthcare settings to address crisis staffing levels.

## Isolation and Quarantine Summary

Employee Symptom/Test Status	Close Contact to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Traveled internationally or by cruise ship	No Travel or Travel within the U.S.
<b>New or unexplained symptom of COVID-19</b>	<p>Isolate and get tested immediately</p> <p>If negative <a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of exposure</p> <p>See “exemptions to quarantine requirements” (household contacts must quarantine unless working in a healthcare setting under crisis standards of care guidance, but such persons must follow all other guidance)</p>	<p>Isolate and get tested immediately.</p> <p>If negative the person can return to normal activities once they are at least 24 hours without a fever (off fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving, AND any one of the following criteria apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person is at least 14 days beyond completion of COVID-19 vaccination, <u>or</u> person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days</li> <li>2. Person completes 10 days of <a href="#">self-quarantine</a> from last day of travel</li> <li>3. Travel was “essential travel” to/from Canada*</li> <li>4. Person ends quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test) collected on day 6-7 of quarantine (Note: If person was tested before days 6-7 of quarantine due to symptoms and was negative, then a second test on day 6-7 is still required to end quarantine after 7 days.)</li> </ol> <p>If traveler is designated as an essential critical infrastructure employee, then person can return to work when they are at least 24 hours without a fever (off fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms improving, but they must quarantine for all other non-work related purposes following the quarantine guidance.</p>	<p>Isolate and get tested immediately.</p> <p>If negative the person can return to normal activities after at least 24 hours without a fever (off fever reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving</p>

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Employee Symptom/Test Status	Close Contact to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Traveled internationally or by cruise ship	No Travel or Travel within the U.S.
<b>Asymptomatic</b>	<p><a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of exposure</p> <p>Get tested</p> <p>See “exemptions to quarantine requirements” (household contacts must quarantine unless working in a healthcare setting under crisis standards of care guidance, but such persons must follow all other guidance)</p>	<p><a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of travel (unless travel was “essential travel” to/from Canada*, person is at least 14 days beyond full COVID-19 vaccination, or person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days)</p> <p>Person has the option of ending quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test) collected on day 6-7 of quarantine</p> <p>If traveler is designated as an essential critical infrastructure employee, then person can return to work as outlined above, but they must quarantine for all other non-work related purposes following the quarantine guidance.</p>	No restrictions
<b>Positive Test for COVID-19</b>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>

\* Essential travel to/from Canada includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, or parental shared custody. Essential travel also includes travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays.

### What is the difference between Isolation and Quarantine?

Isolation applies to people who are sick or infected with the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19; and quarantine applies to people who have been potentially exposed and are at risk of becoming infected. They both mean a person needs to stay home away from others, but the time required for each differs. See this overview of differences [online](#).