

## New Hampshire COVID-19 Employer Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance January 11, 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 key component of business guidance to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into the workplace is effective employee screening and appropriate exclusion from work for 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 areas within the United States, continue to experience high levels of new COVID-19 infections resulting in high risk of exposure for people who live in, or travel to these areas. There are also new strains emerging that appear to be 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.) also increases 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 permit 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 personal domestic travel to areas outside of New England (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)
- Discourage any personal travel on public mass transportation (i.e., bus, plane, train, subway, etc.).
- Discourage travel on cruise ships.
- Discourage personal social or family 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:
  - 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.

- Have you had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days? (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)
- Have you traveled in the prior 10 days for non-essential purposes,\* outside of NH, ME, VT, MA, RI, or CT, including domestically (within the U.S.), internationally (outside of the U.S.) or on a cruise ship?

*\* Essential travel includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only). 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.*

### Employee Exclusion Due to Symptoms (“Isolation” Guidance)

Persons with any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 (even if only mild symptoms) must **not** be allowed into the facility. Symptomatic persons should be instructed to contact their health care provider to be tested 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. The person can be allowed off “isolation” and back to work when either:

- All of the following criteria are met:
  1. The person tests negative with an appropriate test to detect active COVID-19 (including PCR- and antigen-based tests).
  2. They are fever-free for at least 24 hours off fever-reducing medication, and other symptoms are improving.
  3. They have no risk factor for COVID-19 exposure in the prior 10 days (e.g., close contact to a person with COVID-19 or travel risk factors) that would require the person to complete a minimum 10-day quarantine even after testing negative (see quarantine guidance and “exceptions to quarantine requirements” below).

#### OR

- The person has met CDC criteria for discontinuation of isolation (which applies to people who test positive, or for symptomatic people who are not tested). This guidance requires that people isolate for at least 10 days after symptom onset, possibly longer depending on progression of the person’s symptoms.

### Employee Exclusion Due to Known or Potential Exposures (“Quarantine” Guidance)

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

A person can be allowed off “quarantine” and back to work when at least 10 days have passed from their last exposure to a person infectious with COVID-19 or return from travel. Businesses and organizations serving vulnerable populations or 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 their 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 identified with higher-risk travel outside of New England (as outlined above in the screening questions) 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 strictly adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a 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 strictly adhere to all recommended COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a 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 exposure to a person with COVID-19 nor after travel outside of New England:

1. Persons who are 14 days beyond the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., 14 days after full vaccination).
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 face mask when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene at all times. 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).

Below are additional exceptions to quarantine requirements following close contact to someone with COVID-19, or after higher risk travel; however, the following exceptions should not be standard practice. All efforts should be made to allow employees to work remotely during quarantine. For people who do not meet the above two criteria, additional exceptions should only be made if one of the following situations apply:

1. An employee's only risk factor for COVID-19 is travel (i.e., no identified close contact to someone with COVID-19), they are not exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, **AND** that person traveled for essential purposes. "Essential travel" includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only). 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. Non-essential employees who travel to higher risk areas for personal or leisure reasons cannot rely on this exemption, and businesses and employers should develop policies discouraging or preventing essential employees from traveling to high risk areas for non-essential purposes. Even if an employee is allowed to work after "essential travel", that employee should wear a mask, maintains at least 6 feet of separation from other employees and customers, participate in daily health screening, and self-monitor for symptoms.

OR

2. Employee works in a critical infrastructure sector (see also this [CISA memo](#) for more details and examples) **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:
  - 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 mask, maintains at least 6 feet of separation from other employees and customers, and participates in daily health screening while at work as outlined in CDC [guidance](#).

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, face mask use, 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 locations to support critical infrastructure businesses are permitted to stay overnight in New Hampshire hotels without quarantining in their home state 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	Household Contact (highest risk) to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Non-Household Close Contact to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Traveled internationally, by cruise ship, or domestically outside of New England	Travel within New England or No Travel
<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"</p>	<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"</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 has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (at least 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine), <u>or</u> person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days.</li> <li>2. Person completes <a href="#">self-quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of travel</li> <li>3. Travel was "essential travel"</li> <li>4. Person ends quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 test on day 6-7 of quarantine (must be a molecular test to detect active infection, such as a PCR test) (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>

Employee Symptom/Test Status	Household Contact (highest risk) to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Non-Household Close Contact to someone with COVID-19 in past 14 days	Traveled internationally, by cruise ship, or domestically outside of New England	Travel within New England or No Travel
Asymptomatic	<a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of exposure  Get tested  See “exemptions to quarantine requirements”	<a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of exposure  Get tested  See “exemptions to quarantine requirements”	<a href="#">Self-Quarantine</a> for 10 days from last day of travel (unless: travel was deemed “essential travel”, person is fully vaccinated and at least 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days.)  Person has the option of ending quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 test on day 6-7 of quarantine (must be a molecular test to detect active infection, such as a PCR-based test).  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.	No restrictions
Positive Test for COVID-19	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>	<a href="#">Self-Isolate</a>

Essential Travel: Essential travel includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only). 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. Non-essential employees who travel to higher risk areas for personal or leisure reasons cannot rely on this exemption.

### 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](#).