



# MEMO

DATE: September 21, 2022  
TO: All City Supervisors  
FROM: Amber Haglund-Pagel  
SUBJECT: Updated COVID Isolation and Return-To-Work Guidance

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This guidance may change as we learn more about the spread and prevention of COVID. Updated guidance will be sent out as needed.

#### Definition of “Close Contact” used for Quarantine Guidance:

- You were within 6 feet of a positive COVID case for at least 15 minutes (cumulative over 24 hours)
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID
- You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

#### Symptomatic Employees (those having symptoms)

1. Employees who have symptoms of COVID should not report to work, even if they have been fully vaccinated. If symptoms develop during the day, the employee should be sent home immediately. Symptoms may include any of the following, if not attributable to another condition:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
2. Symptomatic employees should pursue COVID testing, regardless of vaccination status.
  - a. A positive rapid/antigen/home test OR a PCR test is sufficient to confirm a case.
  - b. If a symptomatic employee receives a negative rapid/antigen/home test, they should take a PCR test to confirm that they do not have COVID before returning to work, as rapid tests can produce false-negative results. The following is a non-exhaustive list of area providers that currently offer testing:
    - i. Essentia: To start an E-Visit evaluation, the employee should go to <https://www.essentiahealth.org/covid-19/> and follow the online directions.



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- ii. Vault: Walk-in testing is currently available at the DECC Mondays - Thursdays.
  - iii. St. Luke's: A number of locations offer this testing, and are listed at <https://www.slhduluth.com/patients-visitors/patient-resources/covid-19/>
3. If an employee has symptoms, they must quarantine at home until their test result is available.
- a. If test is positive (home/rapid/antigen or PCR): Employee will notify supervisor and isolate at home per the guidelines at the end of this page.
  - b. If test is negative (a PCR test should be used to confirm a negative): Employee will notify supervisor, and follow the usual employer illness protocol.

## Close Contact with a Positive Case

1. Any employee who has had close contact with a confirmed or suspect case of COVID should:
  - a. Wear a well-fitting high-quality mask around others, and distance from others at work if possible for 10 days following the close contact.
  - b. If they develop symptoms, they should isolate at home, seek testing, and await results before returning to the work site. A PCR test result is required to confirm a negative result if the person is symptomatic.
  - c. They should get tested at least 5 days after the close contact even if they have no symptoms.
  - d. If the case is in their household, they must wash their hands before leaving home, and then upon arriving at work. They should also avoid close contact with the positive case in their household as much as possible during that time.

**Note: Employees who have recovered from COVID within the past 30 days, do not need to test following an exposure to a known or suspect case of COVID, UNLESS they start to develop symptoms. If they develop symptoms, they must quarantine and pursue testing.**

## COVID Case Return-to-Work Protocol

Employees with COVID may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

1. At least 5 days\* have passed since symptom onset or positive test, whichever came first, **and**
2. The employee has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
3. Other symptoms have significantly improved.\*\*
4. Upon return to work sites they must avoid all close contacts, and wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask around others for an additional 5 calendar days.

Note: Employees who have tested positive, do not need to provide a negative test before returning to work.



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## Department Specific Conditions

**The Police Department** has this specific variation to this guideline:

The Police Department will consider the day the positive test is taken as “day 1” of the isolation period, regardless of the first day of symptoms.

**Fire Operations staff** have this specific variation to the guidelines:

Fire Operations Staff who test positive will be allowed to ride in vehicles with others immediately following their 5-day isolation, but they must strictly mask around others for at least 5 calendar days following their return date.

\*Five days is the minimum isolation time for positive cases - individuals who experience serious or prolonged illness from this infection, may need additional recovery days.

\*\*Loss of taste or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery, and need not delay the end of isolation.

### Contact Tracing:

Each department is responsible to conduct contact tracing when an employee develops a known or suspect case of COVID.

1. Any other employees or individuals who had close contact with the positive case (see definition on page 1) should be identified, and instructed to watch for symptoms, socially distance, and mask around others for 10 days following their last close contact with the affected employee.
2. As an additional measure of safety, once a suspect or known case is identified, the work group supervisor must ensure that common-touch surfaces in the work area are disinfected, including in shared vehicles.

Because close contact is what most efficiently spreads this infection at work, it should be **AVOIDED** unless it is absolutely necessary to complete a work task.

For questions on any of this guidance, or to report a known or suspect case in your work area, please send an email to the safety office at: [covid@duluthmn.gov](mailto:covid@duluthmn.gov)