

Return to Work Criteria for Stakeholder with Confirmed or Suspected* COVID-19

- CDC’s latest guidelines are the preferred method for bringing stakeholders back to work is the test-based strategy. If the test-based strategy cannot be used, the non-test based strategy may be used.
- Stakeholders who have a lab confirmed, positive COVID-19 test should be excluded from work until 10 days have passed since confirmed test. After 10 days the test-based strategy or non-test-based strategy (if the test-based strategy cannot be used) may be completed.

TEST-based Strategy – Preferred method

NON-TEST-based Strategy

Exclude from work until stakeholder has met ALL of the following criteria:	Exclude from work until stakeholder has met ALL of the following criteria:
1. Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND	1. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery defined: resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND
2. Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND	2. At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
3. Receipt of (2) two negative test results (specimens) that were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart¹ 	

✓ If a stakeholder was never tested for COVID-19 but has an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.

Scenarios/Examples:

<p># 1: Stakeholder is asymptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19; When can he or she return to work? <i>Answer # 1: Stakeholder must be off work a minimum of ten (10) days, then may be tested. If stakeholder cannot be tested, facility may use the non-test-based strategy.</i></p>
<p># 2: Stakeholder is symptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19. On day 6, the stakeholder’s symptoms resolved; When can he or she return to work? <i>Answer #2: Test-based strategy preferred. After symptoms improve may test on day 7 and 8. If unable to test, non-test-based strategy may be used, and Stakeholder can return to work on day 9.</i></p>
<p># 3: Stakeholder was showing symptoms, was tested for COVID-19, and the test came back negative; When can he or she return to work? <i>Answer #3: Stakeholder can return to work (24) hours after being fever-free/asymptomatic without the use of fever-reducing medications.</i></p>
<p>#4: Stakeholder tested positive for COVID-19; Symptoms resolved on day 3; When can he or she return to work? <i>Answer #4: Test-based strategy preferred. Stakeholder can be retested on day 6 and day 7. If both tests are negative can return to work after 2nd negative test results received. If unable to test, non-test-based strategy may be used, and stakeholder may return on the 8th day (at least 7 days from symptom onset and 3 days without symptoms).</i></p>

*Suspected: developed symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fever) but did not get tested for COVID-19

¹See [Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\)](#)