

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

June 17, 2021

Spread of COVID-19 can occur in workplaces and cause significant impact on employees and 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 (see NH [Universal Best Practices](#)). One layer of protection to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into the workplace is employee screening to exclude people who have any new or unexplained [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or risk factors for exposure, including international travel.

Employee Illness and Risk Screening

Facilities and businesses can consider asking screening questions to assess risk for COVID-19 daily before work. If facilities and businesses choose not actively screen, they should remind staff to self-monitor for illness and exposures and exclude themselves from work as appropriate. Screening questions include the following:

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. Has anyone in your household recently tested positive for COVID-19 that you have been in close contact with in the last 10 days (while they were considered infectious and able to spread the virus to others)?
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

Persons with any new or unexplained [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should **not** be allowed into the facility. Employers may choose to rely on a person's report (or parent/guardian report for a child) as to whether a person's symptoms are new or unexplained for a person. Persons with new or unexplained symptoms should be instructed to contact their health care provider to be evaluated for testing for COVID-19 and [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](#).

People can be allowed back to work when they either test negative, or have had a provider assessment and are considered low-risk or unlikely to have COVID-19 based on symptoms and risk factors. Employers do **not** need documentation of a clinical assessment or testing before allowing a person back-to-work, but a person should be fever-free for at least 24 hours off fever-reducing medication with other symptoms improving before being allowed back to work (i.e., people who are sick should not be allowed back to work until they are better). A person diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home and isolate until they have met CDC criteria for [discontinuation of isolation](#).

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

Persons who report close contact to a **household** member diagnosed 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 **in their household** infectious with COVID-19, or since their 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 use a 14 day quarantine for residents and exclusion from the setting for staff to minimize risk of transmission within facilities and to minimize impact on vulnerable populations. In circumstances where an employer has more strict exclusion from the workplace policies (i.e., requires exclusion following a workplace exposures), staff should follow employer policies.

People who should 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 should be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test); antigen tests are not very accurate when used as screening tests on people without symptoms. 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 should still 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 was recently tested and ended quarantine). This 7-day quarantine “test out” option should **ONLY** apply 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 non-household contacts to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 need to [self-observe](#) for symptoms for at least 14 days after their last potential exposure and should themselves be tested if any symptoms develop. During this 14 day period, the person should follow recommended COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social gatherings, wearing a [well-fitted face mask](#), practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.). 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).

Some higher risk settings, such as healthcare workplaces, may still ask their unvaccinated staff members to stay out of work following an exposure. Workplaces may also need to require unvaccinated staff to stay out of work following exposure if the workplace is experiencing an outbreak.

Exceptions to Quarantine

The following people do NOT need to quarantine after close contact to a **household member** diagnosed 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 should be at least 14 days beyond receipt of the second dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, **World Health Organization (WHO) approved 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 should still follow the quarantine guidance).

Such persons, however, should still monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, 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 should 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).