



Updated COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces

May 10, 2022

This letter contains important information about COVID-19 testing, isolation, and returning to work. Please forward it to the appropriate Human Resources managers and other relevant personnel in your organization.

Dear Employer:

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is urging employers to encourage good health habits and enact policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important that employers allow workers who are sick, or have children who are sick, to stay home. Employers should accept the documentation described below for isolation and allow workers to return to work at the appropriate time.

RIDOH's latest guidance on COVID-19, testing, isolation, and quarantine may be found below. We encourage you to provide this information in employee communications, such as newsletters, bulletin boards, and all-employee emails.

Employees should isolate for at least 5 days if they test positive for COVID-19.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 *on either a rapid antigen or a PCR test*, they should isolate at home for at least 5 days, and notify their primary care provider. If they have symptoms, they should stay home for at least 5 days since they started having symptoms. If they don't have symptoms, they should stay home for at least 5 days after the day they were tested.

Employers should accept either a positive rapid antigen or PCR test result from within the previous 5 days as adequate documentation to allow employees to stay home from work and isolate. Employers should **not require** a confirmatory PCR test for an employee to isolate at home. RIDOH considers a positive rapid antigen test to be sufficient proof that isolation is required.

If an employee gets a positive result on a self-administered rapid test, performed either at home or in the workplace, they should still isolate at home for 5 days. If the employee thinks their self-test result was wrong, they should test themselves again within a few days, with at least 24 hours between tests, or contact their primary care provider.

Employers should accept a positive test result as documentation to start or end isolation.

If an employee completes their isolation period and their symptoms have resolved or are resolving, employers should accept a positive *rapid antigen or PCR* test result during the 6 - 90 days after the isolation period as adequate documentation to allow employees to return to work. Employees should wear a high-quality mask for an additional 5 days after their isolation ends.

Employers should **not require** employees to get tested again or provide a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen or PCR test result to end isolation or return to work.

Because someone who has COVID-19 can continue to get a positive test result for up to 90 days, **RIDOH does not recommend getting tested again to confirm a positive test result or to end isolation after 5 days.**



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Close contacts should get tested and may need to quarantine.

If an employee is a close contact of someone who tested positive, they should get tested 5 days after the last time they were with that person, even if they don't have symptoms.

Employees who have had close contact should also quarantine depending on whether they're up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines. You're considered up to date on your vaccines if you've gotten all recommended doses of your primary series and a booster dose.

- Employees who are not up to date with their vaccines should quarantine for at least 5 days. Employees should get a test at least 5 days after exposure and may end quarantine on day 5 if they're negative but should continue to wear a mask for 5 additional days.
- Employees who are up to date on their vaccines don't need to quarantine after close contact if they have:
 - Received a booster **OR**;
 - Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in the last 5 months **OR**;
 - Completed the primary series of Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the last 2 months

There are different COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for people who have compromised immune systems. This means that being "up to date" is different for this group. Please [click here](#) to view COVID-19 vaccine schedules for people who have compromised immune systems.

Thank you for your assistance in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Rhode Island and nationwide this winter. For more information, visit covid.ri.gov.