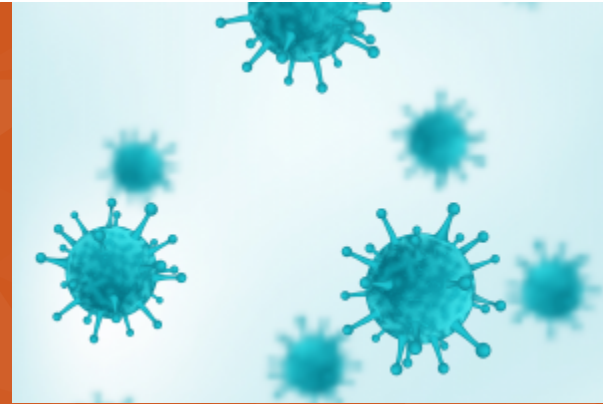


# COVID-19 Alert: CDC Update

## CDC Reduces COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Periods – Sets New Standards for the Management of COVID-Related Employee Absences

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On December 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its **Recommended Isolation and Quarantine Period Guidance** (the “December 27 Guidance”) to reduce, in most instances, both the length of time an individual must isolate after contracting COVID-19, and the quarantine period for those exposed to the illness.

The December 27 Guidance provides new recommended standards for employer management of COVID-related employee absences. Those new standards may be summarized in the following set of procedures:

### PROCEDURE 1: Isolation Protocols

If an employee, regardless of vaccination status, tests positive for COVID-19:

- Instruct the employee to stay home for 5 days.
- If the employee has no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving after five days, they can return to work.
- The employee should continue to wear a mask around others for five additional days.
- If the employee has a fever, they should continue to stay home until the fever resolves.

### PROCEDURE 2: Quarantine Protocols

If an employee is exposed to someone with COVID-19 (*defined as **close contact** within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period*), the employee should be subject to the following quarantine protocols depending on their vaccination status:

**Procedure 2(a):** If the employee is either: (a) unvaccinated; or (b) completed the primary series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago, and is not boosted; or (c) completed the primary series of Johnson & Johnson over 2 months ago, and is not boosted, then:

- Instruct the employee to stay home for 5 days. After that, the employee may return to work, but must wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If the employee cannot quarantine, the employee must wear a mask for 10 days.
- The employee should test on the 5<sup>th</sup> day, if possible.

- If the employee develops symptoms, they should be instructed to stay home and get tested.

**Procedure 2(b):** If the employee: (a) is boosted; or (b) has completed the primary series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months; or (c) has completed the primary series of Johnson & Johnson within the last 2 months, then:

- Instruct the employee to wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- The employee should test on the 5<sup>th</sup> day, if possible.
- If the employee develops symptoms, they should be instructed to stay home and get tested.

The constant change of COVID-related rules, affecting employment, has been a stress point for many employees over the past two years. The CDC's new isolation and quarantine standards should be communicated to employees in clear terms, and incorporated in each employer's standard COVID safety policies.

Morse is focused on assisting our clients through these unprecedented times. Please contact **Matthew Mitchell** should you have questions concerning this subject, or any other COVID-19 response matters.

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