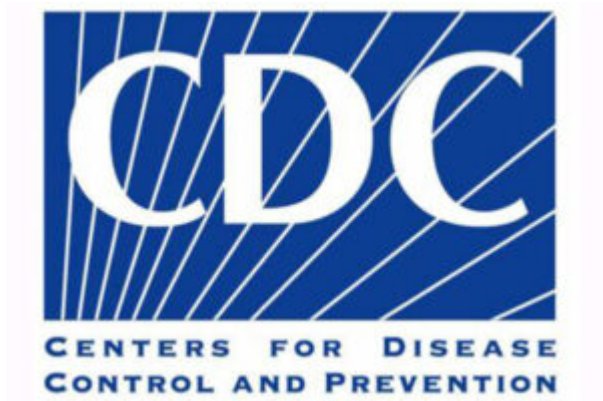


# Compliance Alert: CDC Eases Quarantine Criteria for Critical Infrastructure Workers



## Scenarios

- Worker 1 lives at home with and had close contact with a spouse who's confirmed as having COVID-19 within 48 hours of the spouse's becoming symptomatic; and
- Worker 2 has had close contact, i.e., within 6 feet or 2 meters, of a co-worker with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 within 48 hours of the co-worker's exhibiting symptoms.

These scenarios describe what's called "potential exposure."

## Guidelines for Potential Exposure

**Current Guidelines:** Under current government emergency orders and public health guidelines ("Guidelines"), the employer must send both Workers home for self-isolation of 14 days.

**Revised Guidelines:** On April 8, the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued revised Guidelines that would allow workers with potential exposure to keep working provided that proper health and safety measures are taken. And while the CDC revisions apply only to a narrow set of workers and circumstances, they're likely to serve as a blueprint for the relaxation of quarantine, self-isolation and social distancing restrictions as the COVID-19 crisis wanes and workplaces return to normal.

## The 7 Conditions

The CDC specifies conditions that must be met for potentially exposed workers to be allowed to remain on the job.

### 1. Workers Must Be Critical Infrastructure Workers

The point of the new CDC rules is to ensure continuity of essential operations.

Accordingly, they apply only to “critical infrastructure workers” in 16 different work sectors, including:

- Law enforcement;
- 911 call center employees;
- Fusion Center employees;
- Hazardous material responders;
- Janitorial and other custodial staff; and
- Workers, including contracted vendors, in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities.

## **2. Worker Must Be Asymptomatic**

The relaxed guidelines apply only to potentially exposed workers that are asymptomatic. Workers who become sick during the shift must be sent home immediately and the employer must ensure the following measures are taken:

- Cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces in the sick worker’s workspace;
- Determination of persons who had close contact with the sick worker within 2 days of the worker’s having symptoms;
- Treating all others at the site who had close contact during that 2-day window as being potentially exposed.

## **3. Worker Must Be Pre-Screened**

Before potentially exposed workers start work each day and, ideally, before they enter the facility, the employer must take the worker’s temperature and ask whether they’ve had COVID-19 symptoms, i.e., sore throat, difficulty breathing, cough, fever or sudden loss of smell. Workers with above-normal body temperature or who report symptoms should be sent home immediately.

## **4. Worker Must Be Regularly Monitored**

Workers that clear medical screening should be required to self-monitor under the supervision of the employer’s occupational health program.

## **5. Worker Must Wear Mask**

Potentially exposed workers should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or approve workers’ supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages. Employers and workers should also consider pilot testing the use of face masks to ensure they don’t interfere with work assignments.

## **6. Worker Must Maintain Social Distancing**

The worker must stay at least 6 feet away from other persons and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace. Of course, social distancing is required for all workers including during breaks, which should be staggered to ensure that workers don’t congregate in break areas.

## **7. Worker’s Work Area Must Get Frequent Cleaning & Disinfection**

In addition to routine cleaning and disinfection of all work areas, bathrooms, common areas and touch points like door knobs and keyboards, the work space of

potentially exposed workers should probably get more frequent cleaning and disinfection. No workers should share headsets or other objects that are near their mouth or nose. The CDC also recommends that employers work with facility maintenance staff to increase air exchanges in rooms and common areas.