



Guidance for Employers Regarding COVID-19 Infection and Exposure

The purpose of the guidance is to help employers determine next steps when being notified that a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to replace medical evaluation or any other recommendations by the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov) or the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov).

All information is subject to change.

BACKGROUND

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infection caused by a virus that can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. While it is primarily spread by coming into close contact (about 6 feet) of a person who is infected with COVID-19, it may also be spread by touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. This includes staying home as much as possible, avoiding close contact with others, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surface, and washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

[EPA-approved disinfectants](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2) can be found online at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. Bleach solutions (for example 1/3 cup bleach added to 1 gallon of water) and 70% alcohol solutions are also effective alternatives if the EPA-approved disinfectants are in short supply.

Anyone who is ill should stay home. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19, but some people are at higher risk for more severe illness, including hospitalization and death. Persons who are at higher risk include those who are over 65 years of age and people with [serious underlying medical conditions](#), particularly if not well controlled. More details regarding people who may be at higher risk can be found online at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

When an Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

In most cases, the Infected Employee will notify the employer of a positive test result. If so, notify Butte County Public Health, 530.552.3050.

In some cases, Butte County Public Health (BCPH) will be the first to notify an employer that an employee tested positive.

If the Infected Employee is at home, instruct to stay home.
If Infected Employee is at work, send home immediately.

BCPH will determine whether the Infected Employee had prolonged direct contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with other employees or customers during the two days before symptoms first started or since the case tested positive.

BCPH may not always contact an employer when an employee tests positive. Contact is made with an employer when it is necessary to seek the employer's assistance with identifying and reaching out to close contacts, or when it is necessary to coordinate with the business regarding operations.

Business performs assessment of facility and arranges for thorough cleaning and disinfecting of areas where the infected employee was present while infectious. (BCPH may provide direction)

In conjunction with BCPH, the business will identify individuals (employees or customers) who may have had close contact with the Infected Employee and the last date of exposure.

BCPH will call all close contacts of Infected Employee.

Business may allow Infected Employee to work remotely if they are well enough and are able to perform work duties from home.

Infected Employee should not return to work until meeting criteria (see page 3 Returning to Work). BCPH will determine when the Infected Employee is released from isolation.

Written documentation of release from isolation can be provided by BCPH.



Based on the CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#), and [Discontinuation of Home Isolation](#)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>

Legend

Employer

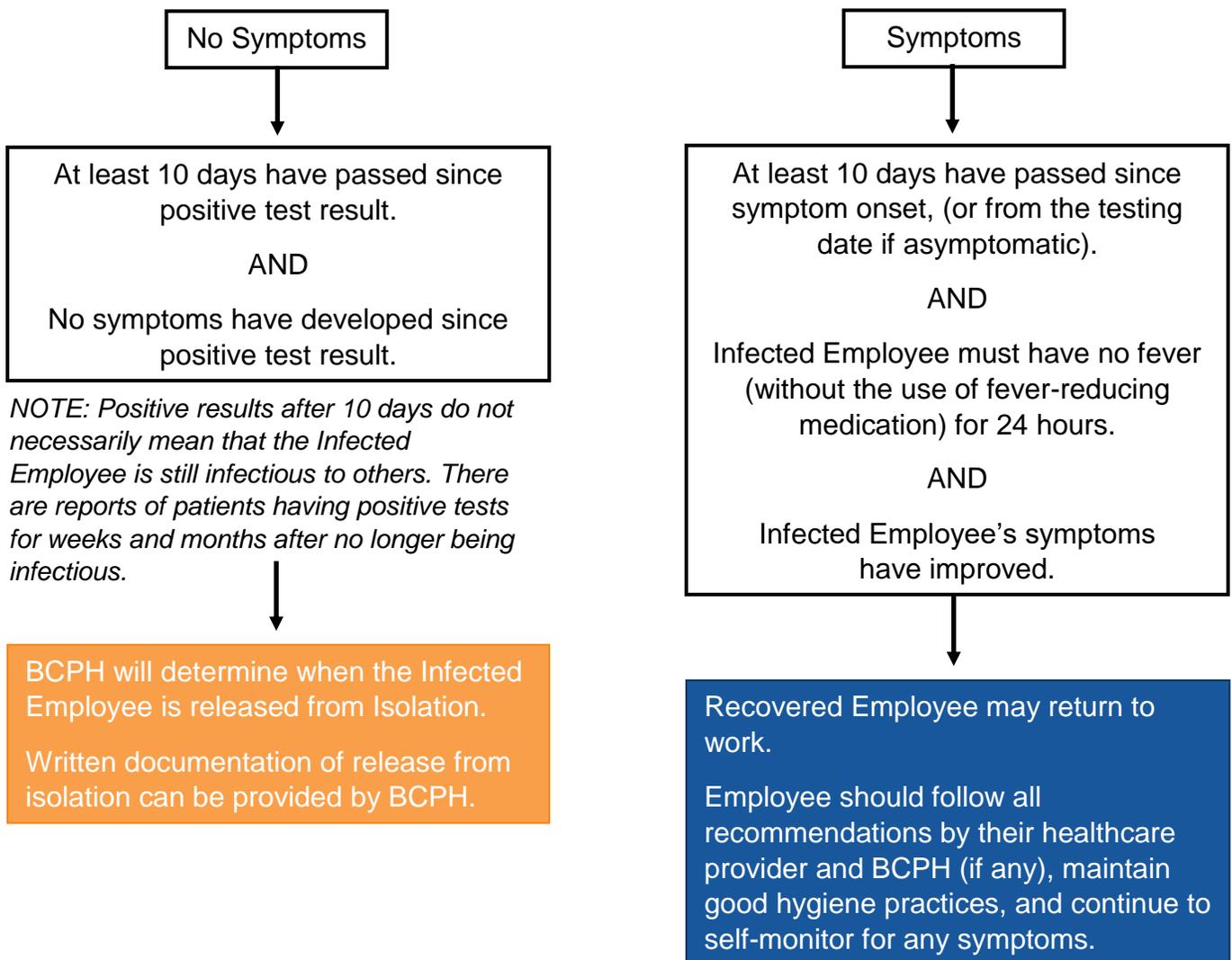
BCPH

Collaboration

Returning to Work After Testing Positive for COVID-19

An Infected Employee who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 may not return to work until they meet the CDC criteria for discontinuation of isolation. Butte County Public Health (BCPH) will utilize the following Symptom/Time based strategy.

BCPH determines if the patient had symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 infection regardless if it is before or after testing.



Based on the CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#), and [Discontinuation of Home Isolation](#)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>

Legend

Employer

BCPH

Individual

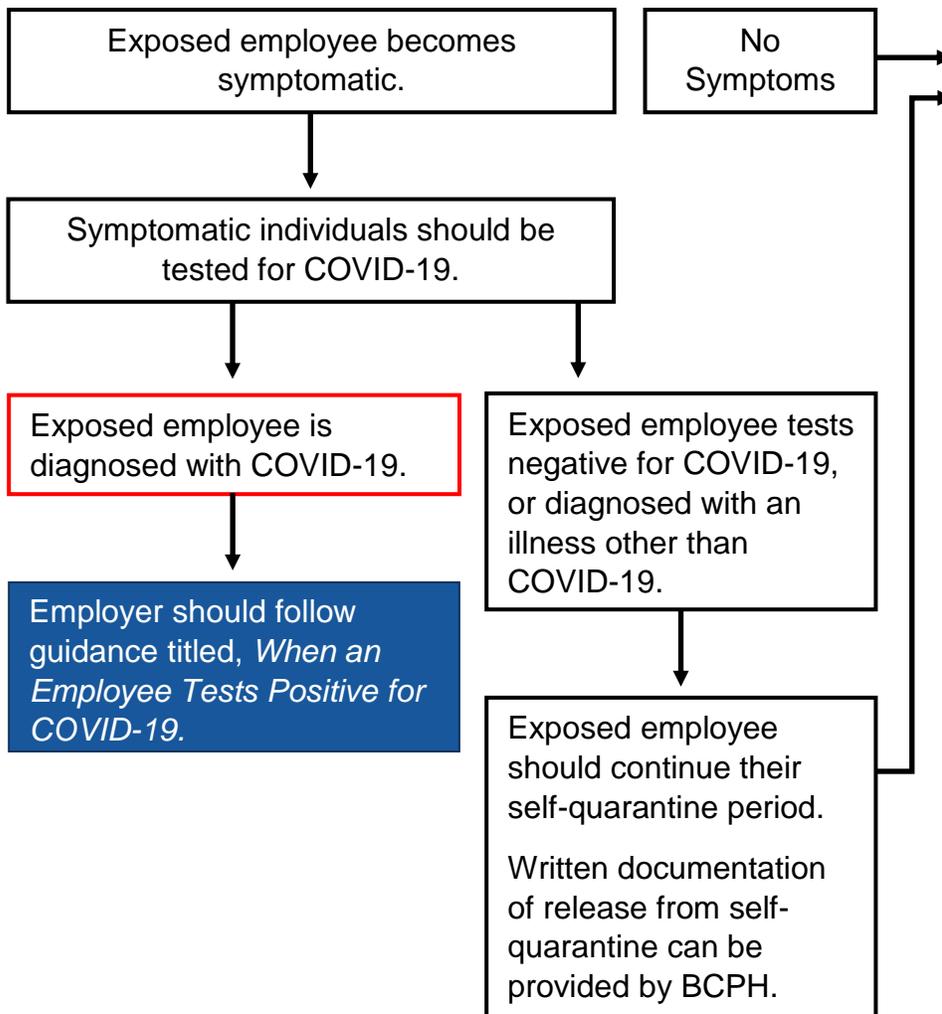
Close Contacts to a Lab-confirmed COVID-19 Case

Butte County Public Health (BCPH) will provide follow up to close contacts. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person during their infectious period for 15 minutes or longer. This can occur 2 days before symptoms appear or the positive test is collected, and during the first 10 days from symptom onset or the positive COVID-19 test.

BCPH will monitor Employee for symptoms during their quarantine period. It is recommended that all those in quarantine get tested for COVID-19 on day 3 to 5 and day 14 of their quarantine period.

Allow exposed employee to work remotely during self-quarantine if able to perform duties from home.

Allow exposed employee to return to work 14 days after their last exposure to the person who tested positive as long as they remain asymptomatic.



Based on the CDC's [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html),
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

Legend

Employer

BCPH

Individual



Butte County Public Health Resources

The following resources can be used by employers for general questions regarding COVID-19, testing, community guidance, etc.

Butte County Public Health Website: <http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/>

Butte County COVID-19 Call Center: (530) 552-3050