



UPDATE TO THE RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

RELATED TO COVID-19 TESTING OR SYMPTOMS AND TEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS TO CITY OF BOSTON ATTENDANCE POLICY

Effective as of June 2, 2022

DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document is intended to provide guidance for employees who test positive for COVID-19, are experiencing symptoms, or are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

EMPLOYEES

City of Boston employees must **notify their managers and their department's HR manager(s)** immediately if they:

1. Experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19;
2. Test positive for COVID-19; or
3. Are identified as a close contact, or believe they may be a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

DEPARTMENTS

In all cases, departments must **submit a case report** to the City's Public Health Nurse.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Public Health Nurse will then **provide direction** on the employee's return to work, assist with workplace contact tracing, and notification of any workplace close contacts.

Employees will **receive return to work guidance from their department's HR manager(s)**, based on the following protocols.

***Please note:** for the purposes of this guidance, a "test" refers to either a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test or a rapid antigen test unless otherwise specified.*



PROTOCOL

**FOR ALL EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS
CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19**

Both **fully vaccinated employees** and **not fully vaccinated employees** experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19:

- Are **not allowed in the workplace** and should be sent home immediately.
- Must **get tested and remain out of work** until a result is received.
 - **If a PCR test is negative** they should remain out of work until they are free of fever and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours.
 - **If a rapid antigen test** is negative they should remain out of work until they repeat a rapid antigen test in 48 hours and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours.
 - **If any of these tests are positive** they must follow the Return to Work guidelines in Section 2 below.

Before returning to work:

Employees must fill out the [Employee Certification of Return to Work Following COVID-19 Testing or Symptoms](#) form and submit it to their department's HR manager(s).

**FOR FULLY VACCINATED EMPLOYEES WHO TEST
POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

Fully vaccinated employees can **return to work 5 days** after their positive test only when they:

- Produce a negative rapid antigen test taken on or after day 5;
 - Have been without fever for 24 hours;
 - And have experienced improvement in other symptoms.
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If a **fully vaccinated employee** is unable to produce a negative antigen test, they can **return to work 10 days** after their initial positive test result, on Day 11.

Before returning to work:

- Employees must fill out the [Employee Certification of Return to Work Following COVID-19 Testing or Symptoms](#) and submit it to their department's HR manager(s) .

Following the 5-day isolation period:

- **Fully vaccinated employees** must consistently **wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days** when around others.

FOR NOT FULLY VACCINATED EMPLOYEES WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Not fully vaccinated employees can **return to work 7 days** after their positive test only when they:

- Produce a negative rapid antigen test taken on or after day 7;
- Have been without fever for 24 hours;
- And have experienced improvement in other symptoms.

If a **not fully vaccinated employee** is unable to produce a negative antigen test, they can **return to work 10 days** after their initial positive test result, on Day 11.

Before returning to work:

- All employees must fill out the [Employee Certification of Return to Work Following COVID-19 Testing or Symptoms](#) and submit it to their department's HR manager(s).

Following the 7-day isolation period:

- **Not fully vaccinated employees** must consistently **wear a well-fitting mask for 3 additional days** when around others.



FOR **FULLY VACCINATED EMPLOYEES** WHO ARE A CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE THAT TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Note: Departmental HR will consult with the employee and the Boston Public Health Commission to determine if an employee meets the definition of a close contact.

Fully vaccinated employees with no COVID-19-like symptoms do not need to quarantine following an exposure to an individual with COVID-19, according to the CDC.

- **Fully vaccinated employees** should wear a well-fitting mask around others for **10 days** from the date of their last exposure.
- **Fully vaccinated employees** are encouraged to get tested at least **5 days** after exposure.
- If they experience symptoms, the employee should follow the protocol outlined in Section 1 above.

FOR **not fully vaccinated EMPLOYEES** WHO ARE A CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE THAT TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Note: Departmental HR will consult with the employee and the Boston Public Health Commission to determine if an employee meets the definition of a close contact.

Not fully vaccinated employees who are identified as a close contact of an individual with COVID-19 can return to the workplace only when they:

- Have **quarantined for at least 5 days*** from the last date of close contact, and
- Can **produce a negative rapid test on or after day 5** of their quarantine period.



If an employee does not obtain a test following exposure:

- **Not fully vaccinated employees** must **quarantine for 10 days** from the last date of close contact and return to work on Day 11.
- Employees should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of their last exposure.

**Household contacts:*

- If the **not fully vaccinated employee** is unable to reliably isolate from members of their household who test positive for COVID-19, they **must quarantine for at least 5 days from when their household member is cleared** to end isolation, **if they are able to produce a negative rapid test** on or after day 5 after their household member exits isolation.
- If they do not obtain a test following exposure, **not fully vaccinated employees** must **quarantine for 10 days after their household member exits isolation** and return to work on Day 11.

Before returning to work:

- All employees must fill out the [Employee Certification of Return to Work Following COVID-19 Testing or Symptoms](#) and submit it to their department's HR manager(s).

Following the 7-day isolation period:

- Employees should monitor themselves for symptoms
- **Not fully vaccinated employees** must consistently **wear a well-fitting mask for 3 additional days** when around others.

**ATTENDANCE
POLICY**

**TEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE CITY OF BOSTON
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The following temporary policy modifications continue to be observed for employees who are absent due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and who provide medical documentation:

- Employees with insufficient sick leave and/or who have exhausted their supplemental leave will be permitted to use other leaves of
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absence such as personal, vacation and floating holidays with less than the forty-eight (48) hours notice;

- Consecutive absences covered by a doctor's note will be treated as one (1) instance; and
- Employees who have exhausted all leaves and fall into a sick no pay status may not be subject to discipline.

All other provisions of the City's Attendance Policy remain in full effect and employees continue to be required to follow call-in procedures.

Falsification of documentation shall be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. These modifications are temporary in nature and will remain in force and effect until the City deems them no longer necessary or further updates are required.

If you have questions, please contact covidleave@boston.gov or your Departmental HR manager(s).

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Return to Work Informational Packet for Vaccinated Employees](#)
- [Return to Work Informational Packet for Not Fully Vaccinated Employees](#)

FORMS

- [Employee Certification of Return to Work Following COVID-19 Testing or Symptoms](#)

TERMS TO KNOW

1. **Fully vaccinated:** Individuals are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen).
 2. **Not fully vaccinated:** For the purposes of this guidance, "not fully vaccinated employees" are those who do not meet the definition of "fully vaccinated" above.
 3. **Close contact:** The definition of a close contact is coming within 6 feet of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 for 10-15 minutes or
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longer over the course of a 24-hour period, regardless of whether masks were worn, in the 2 days prior to the administration of the positive test or onset of symptoms, whichever came first.

Departmental HR will consult with the employee and the Boston Public Health Commission to determine if an employee meets the definition of a close contact using this definition while taking into account the unique circumstances of each case.

- 4. PCR Test:** *The PCR test takes a sample of ribonucleic acid (RNA) and “amplifies” it with the help of lab technologies. PCR tests must be done by a health care provider, and they don’t produce immediate results, which means you may be waiting a few days to know if you’re positive or negative.*

- 5. Rapid Antigen Test:** *The rapid test, called an antigen test, checks for proteins that are found on the outside of the virus. When you take or give your nasal swab sample, it’s put into a liquid and then onto a test strip. Results are typically available after approximately 15 minutes or so.*