



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Re: Clearance to return to work after COVID-19

Stanislaus County is seeing widespread community transmission of COVID-19. With this increase in illness in Stanislaus County, in California, and in many States, testing for COVID-19 is more in demand and is becoming more limited. Testing must be prioritized for those with illness where interventions can stop spread.

Testing for clearance to return to work is not indicated at this time except in certain situations. The reasons for not requiring two tests to clear for return to work are:

1. Limited testing currently available and must be reserved for diagnosis, not clearance.
2. The test currently performed detects viral genetic material, not live virus. This test can remain positive long after live virus is gone.
3. There are good data that a person is no longer able to spread the virus that causes COVID-19 10 days after onset of symptoms.

A person is cleared to return to work **ten (10) days after symptom onset** (ten (10) days after test date if the person never had symptoms) and at least **three (3) days after recovery**. Recovery is defined as fever is gone without using any fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol, and other symptoms of COVID are improving.

Exceptions to this are:

1. Those working in hospitals and those living or working in congregate settings such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, and homeless shelters.
 - a. People living in congregate settings should remain in isolation for 14 days after symptom onset and at least three (3) days after recovery.
 - b. People working in hospitals and congregate living facilities may return to work on day 11 but should be assigned tasks without patient contact until the 14 days have passed.
2. People who are immunocompromised and those who have been severely ill with COVID-19. Both groups of people can take longer than 10 days to become non-infectious and clearance should be done on a case-to-case basis taking into account their living and working situation.

Please ensure your policies do not require two negative tests prior to return to work. For more information, please see Guidance from the California Department of Public Health for Employers Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Workplace-Outbreak-Employer-Guidance.aspx>

If you have any questions on clearance to return to work, please call 209-558-5678.

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