



Criteria for Release from Home Isolation and/or Quarantine and Return to Work

For all Residents of Alameda County, Health Care Personnel, Long-Term-Care Personnel and
Emergency Responders with or Exposed to COVID-19

Updated July 28, 2020

I. Release from Home Isolation

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) does not issue Termination of Isolation Orders, nor do they issue any Return to Work Letters for employees or employers. Instead, the ACPHD relies on individuals to determine when (based on their own health and the amount of time they have been without symptoms) they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation and return to work or daily activities (see blanket Isolation orders posted at <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov/resources/quarantine-and-isolation.aspx>).

ACPHD generally discourages employers from requiring employees to obtain negative test results as a prerequisite to return to work. ACPHD discourages the use of clearance tests for the general population, as does the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). There are, however, some required restrictions (outlined below) when health care personnel and staff return to work at Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs), Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE) and other residential care sites.

Additionally, all persons in Alameda County must adhere to Health Officer Order #20-08 requiring members of the public and workers to wear face coverings <http://www.acphd.org/media/569455/health-officer-order-20-08-face-coverings-2020.04.17.pdf> when outside of their household to help control the spread of COVID-19.

A. For any Person with COVID-19 to Be Released from Home Isolation and Return to Work or Daily Activitiesⁱ

The Alameda County Public Health Department follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) symptom-based and time-based strategies to determine when a person with COVID-19 may be released from home isolation:

Persons with COVID-19 who had symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed *since recovery* (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications), **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms); **and**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

OR

Persons who never experienced any COVID-19 symptoms may discontinue home isolation 10 days from the date of their first positive COVID-19 test if they have not developed any subsequent symptoms.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

B. For General Health Care Personnel (who do *NOT* work at a SNF, LTCF, RCFE or residential or other congregate care site) **to be Released from Home Isolation and Return to Work**ⁱ

ACPHD follows the CDC's symptom-based and time-based strategies for releasing Health Care Personnel (HCP) to return to work **with restrictions** for most HCP (See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html>.)

HCP with COVID-19 who had symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed *since recovery* (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications), **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms); **and**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

OR

HCP who never experienced any COVID-19 symptoms and remain symptom free **may** return to work 10 days from the date of their COVID-19 test.*

After returning to work, HCP should:

- Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility until all symptoms are completely resolved, **or** until 14 days after illness onset (or date of test if HCP never experienced any symptoms), whichever is longer
- Be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset (or date of test if HCP never experienced any symptoms)
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette in [CDC's interim infection control guidance](#) (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles)
- Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms develop, recur or worsen

***Note:** It is possible that in situations of critical staffing shortages, (per guidance by the CDC on mitigating healthcare personnel staffing shortages that might occur because of COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>), some asymptomatic health care personnel may be asked to return to work within a time frame shorter than 10 days. These situations will be examined on a case by case basis.

C. All Personnel Who Work in SNFs, LTCFs, or RCFEs¹

ACPHD follows the CDC's symptom-based and time-based strategies for releasing personnel from SNFs, LTCFs, RCFEs or residential care facilities to return to work **with restrictions** (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html>) and also to follow **all** requirements in the April 13, 2020 Health Officer Order Requiring all Licensed Facilities to Implement Guidance to Control the Spread of COVID-19 (<http://www.acphd.org/media/568207/health-officer-order-20-07-licensed-facilities-and-other-agencies-2020.04.13.pdf>).

SNF or LTCF personnel with COVID-19 who had symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed *since recovery*, (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications) **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms); **and**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

OR

SNF/LTCF Personnel **who never experienced any COVID-19 symptoms** and remain symptom free **may** return to work 10 days from the date of their COVID-19 test.*

After returning to work, SNF/LTCF personnel must follow the below workplace requirements:

- Employee and employer must follow all requirements in *HEALTH OFFICER ORDER FOR THE CONTROL OF COVID-19 No. 20-07*, (<http://www.acphd.org/media/568207/health-officer-order-20-07-licensed-facilities-and-other-agencies-2020.04.13.pdf>) including temperature screening, symptom self-monitoring, and **mandatory masking at all times** in the workplace.
- Employee must be restricted from contact with **severely immunocompromised** patients for 14 days from onset of symptoms (or from test date if asymptomatic).

***Note:** It is possible that in situations of critical staffing shortages, (per guidance by the CDC on mitigating healthcare personnel staffing shortages that might occur because of COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>), some asymptomatic SNF/LTCF personnel may be asked to return to work within a time frame shorter than 10 days. These situations will be examined on a case by case basis.

II. Release from Home Quarantine

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) does not issue Termination of Quarantine orders, nor do they issue Return to Work letters for employees who were under quarantine orders. Instead, ACPHD relies on individuals to determine when (based on their own health and the amount of time that has passed) they have met the criteria to discontinue home quarantine and to return to work or daily activities (see blanket Quarantine orders posted at <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov/resources/quarantine-and-isolation.aspx>.)

A. For Any Person to be Released from Home Quarantine and Return to Work or Daily Activities (including HCP, Personnel at SNFs and LTCFs)

Alameda County residents, health care personnel and staff at skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) or long-term care facilities (LTCFs), have met criteria to discontinue home quarantine when they have been able to:

- Stay in their home or another residence through 14 days from the last date they were in contact with the person infected or likely to be infected with COVID-19*

AND

- They have remained symptom free (they have not developed any COVID-19-like symptoms, e.g. fever, cough or shortness of breath) throughout that 14-day period.*

All persons in Alameda County must also adhere to Health Officer Order #20-08 requiring members of the public and workers to wear face coverings <http://www.acphd.org/media/569455/health-officer-order-20-08-face-coverings-2020.04.17.pdf> when outside of their household to help control the spread of COVID-19.

B. Critical Infrastructure Workers, Public Safety and Law Enforcement Workers who have been exposed and remain asymptomatic may be asked to return to work immediately as long as the proper safety precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. Those precautions are outlined in the CDC guidance *Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>.

***Note:** It is possible that in situations of critical staffing shortages, (per guidance by the CDC on mitigating healthcare personnel staffing shortages that might occur because of COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>), some asymptomatic health care personnel and SNF/LTCF personnel may be allowed to leave their home and attend work (and only work) within a time frame shorter than 14 days until they reach the end of their incubation period. These situations will be examined on a case by case basis.

Criteria for Release from Isolation or Quarantine and Return to Work

~ Endnotes ~

ⁱ Endnote: For a small subset of individuals who are severely or critically ill or who are severely immunocompromised (with or without symptoms), it is recommended that they remain in Isolation and wait to return to work for a duration of 20 days instead of 10. These individuals often are hospitalized. Source for this documentation:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html#definitions>

Category of Patient/Individual	Definition	When Individual Can Be Released from Isolation and Return to Work
Patient/Individual with Severe or Critical Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe Illness: Individuals who have respiratory frequency >30 breaths per minute, SpO₂ <94% on room air at sea level, ratio of arterial partial pressure of oxygen to fraction of inspired oxygen (PaO₂/FiO₂) <300mmHg, or lung infiltrates >50%. • Critical Illness: Individuals who have respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction 	At least 20 days after symptom onset
Patient/Individual who Is Severely Immunocompromised	<p>Ultimately, the degree of immunocompromise for the patient/individual is determined by the treating doctor. For the purposes of this guidance, however, CDC defines being severely immunocompromised based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some conditions, such as being on chemotherapy for cancer, untreated HIV infection with CD4 T lymphocyte count <200, combined primary immunodeficiency disorder, and receipt of prednisone >20mg/day for more than 14 days. • Other factors, such as advanced age, diabetes mellitus, or end-stage renal disease. These may pose a much lower degree of immunocompromise and not clearly affect decisions about duration of transmission-based precautions. 	<p>At least 20 days after symptom onset</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>If asymptomatic, 20 days from date of first COVID-19 positive test</p>