



City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Public Health

Dear San Francisco Employer:

Thank you for all that you are doing to ensure your employees are well and not at risk of spreading COVID-19 to others at the workplace. We appreciate all your efforts to modify your businesses and everyday lives to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and to save lives.

The [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard \(ETS\)](#)¹ requires any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 to isolate. This is based on guidance from [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#). Most employees² diagnosed with COVID-19 may return to work after 5 days with a strong recommendation to wear a well-fitted mask until at least day 10 if:

- (1) They have a negative test³ collected on day 5 or later AND either:
 - (a) If they had symptoms, it has been 5 days since their symptoms started, their symptoms have improved, AND they do not have a fever, OR
 - (b) If they never had any symptoms, it has been 5 days since they tested positive.

SFDPH does not recommend requiring a medical note to return to work. Requesting employees to provide a medical note creates a backlog on the healthcare system and delays return to work. Employees may return to work when they meet the criteria described above.

Employees who meet the criteria above may print this letter out if their employer asks for written proof to return to work. This letter can be found online at <https://sf.gov/topics/business-during-coronavirus-pandemic>.

Please refer to the following resources for more details:

- Isolation and Quarantine: Stay home when you have or might have COVID-19:
 - <https://sf.gov/youve-had-close-contact-or-positive-test>
 - <https://sf.gov/quarantining-covid-19>
- San Francisco-specific information for employers: <https://sf.gov/topics/business-during-coronavirus-pandemic>
- What employers should do if someone in the workplace has COVID-19: <https://sf.gov/step-by-step/what-do-if-someone-work-has-covid-19>

Thank you for all that you do to keep our community healthy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Philip".

Susan Philip, MD, MPH
Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco

¹ Another resource is [Cal/OSHA FAQs](#). Some workplaces are subject to the [Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\) Standard](#).

² This letter may not be applicable to healthcare settings (including long term care facilities), jails, shelters, and schools.

³ An antigen test is preferred. Over the counter tests are acceptable to end isolation.

Returning to Work for Those Who Have Had COVID-19

Did the employee have symptoms?

YES, the employee had symptoms. They may return to work if they check ALL four boxes:

It has been more than 5 days since my symptoms started.

Today's date: _____

Date symptoms started: _____

My symptoms have improved.

It has been more than 24 hours since I had a fever without fever-reducing medications.

I have a negative COVID-19 test that was collected on or after 5 days from the date my symptoms started.

Date of negative test: _____

OR

It has been more than 10 days since symptoms have started.

NO, the employee did not have symptoms. They may return to work if they check ONE of the boxes:

It has been more than five days since I tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, and I have a negative COVID-19 test that was collected on or after 5 days from the date my symptoms started.

Today's date: _____

Date of positive test: _____

Date of negative test: _____

It has been more than 10 days since I tested positive for COVID-19.

Today's date: _____

Date symptoms started: _____

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____