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Featured News

EMPLOYMENT ALERT
UPDATE RE CDC PANDEMIC GUIDELINES

On December 27, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidelines as to the recommended time frames for isolation of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, and quarantine of individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19. Before diving into the updates, it is important to note that Contra Costa County, Alameda County, and San Francisco County have not yet adopted the revised guidelines. To date, the only Bay Area counties to have confirmed that they are following the new guidelines are Marin, Napa, and San Mateo counties.

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID are required to isolate. “Isolate” means separating from people who are not infected; staying in a designated “sick room”; and using a separate bathroom. The updated CDC guidelines shorten the period of isolation for asymptomatic individuals from ten (10) days to five (5) days, to be followed by wearing a well-fitting mask for an additional five (5) days. Symptomatic individuals must isolate until at least five (5) days after symptoms have subsided, after which they can cease to isolate but must wear a mask around other individuals for five (5) days thereafter.

In counties that have not yet adopted the updated CDC regulations, the following guidelines for isolation of individuals who have tested positive remain in effect:

Individuals without symptoms must isolate for ten (10) days from the date of a positive test.

Individuals with symptoms must isolate until at least twenty four (24) hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of both fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement of cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms if present; and at least ten (10) days have passed since their symptoms started.

The CDC has also updated its guidelines for the quarantine of individuals who have been exposed to COVID. “Quarantine” means staying home from work or school; avoiding running errands; avoiding visitors; refraining from sharing eating utensils, beverages, and/or toothbrushes; washing



hands frequently; covering the mouth while sneezing or coughing; and disposing of used tissues separately. Individuals are deemed to have been “exposed” to COVID if they have had “close contact” with an infected person. A “close contact” is defined as being within six (6) feet of an infected person for a period of fifteen (15) minutes or longer over a twenty four (24) hour period.

Under the updated guidelines, the CDC recommends that the following individuals quarantine for five (5) days, followed by wearing a mask for five (5) days:

- unvaccinated people
- people who are more than six (6) months beyond their second Moderna/Pfizer dose and who have not received a booster shot
- people who are more than two (2) months beyond their J&J dose and who have not received a booster shot.

Individuals who have received a booster shot do not need to quarantine, but should wear a mask for ten (10) days after exposure. If symptoms occur, however, all individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms that the symptoms are not attributable to COVID. For all exposed individuals, best practice is to be tested five (5) days after exposure.

In counties that have not adopted the CDC guidelines, unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID and are asymptomatic must quarantine for either:

- Seven (7) days if the individual tests negative five (5) or more days after exposure
- Ten (10) days from the date of exposure if the individual remains asymptomatic, and wears a mask around unexposed individuals for four (4) days thereafter
- Fourteen (14) days.

Fully vaccinated individuals (who have had both doses of Moderna/Pfizer or the single J&J dose) who are exposed but asymptomatic do not need to quarantine, but do need to monitor for symptoms and follow all non-pharmaceutical precautions (masking, social distancing, frequent hand washing, and avoiding large crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) for fourteen (14) days after exposure. Vaccinated individuals who develop symptoms should immediately quarantine and be tested to determine whether the symptoms are attributable to COVID.

Employers: please note that business establishments that serve food and drinks and fitness facilities are still required to exclude patrons twelve (12) years old and older from certain indoor areas if they do not show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, or a negative COVID-19 test result from the past three days. Workers who work in indoor portions of these businesses are required to show proof of full vaccination or weekly test results.

Please also note that indoor masking requirements remain in effect. All people in Contra Costa County, regardless of vaccination status, must wear face coverings in indoor public settings until further notice. Public settings include but are not limited to:

- Business offices
- Retail stores
- Restaurants
- Gyms and fitness centers

- Theaters
- Family entertainment centers
- Meeting rooms
- State and local government facilities where services are provided to the public

This order does not apply to people in the following circumstances:

- When alone in a room.
- When actively eating or drinking.
- When swimming or showering.
- When receiving care or other service that requires removal of the face covering, including by way of example and without limitation, medical care requiring exposure of the nose or mouth, cosmetic services involving the face, and dental procedures.
- When participating in a religious activity at a religious gathering, to the extent that removal of face coverings is necessary for participation.
- When exempt from wearing face coverings under the State Face Covering Guidance or other applicable California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance. The State Face Covering Guidance exempts the following individuals from wearing masks:
 - Persons younger than two years old. Very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation.
 - Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask, including persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.
 - Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
 - Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding COVID-19 and your employees.



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