



# INYO COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC HEALTH BRIEF

James Richardson, M.D.  
Public Health Officer, Inyo County  
760-873-7868

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## Criteria for Return to Work for Individuals with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19

**Who this is for:** The following interim guidance may help employers plan and prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. CDC recommends not requiring a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities are extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

Decisions about return to work for symptomatic individuals with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should be made in the context of local circumstances. Currently in Inyo County, COVID-19 testing is limited and being prioritized to the severely ill. Many individuals with a respiratory illness will be symptomatic without receiving any confirmatory testing for COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses include cough, fever and shortness of breath. **Follow the guidelines below for any employee who has experienced these symptoms and is requesting to return to work:**

***Non-test-based strategy (symptomatic individuals not tested for COVID-19). This is the most common scenario in Inyo County due to limited testing resources. Exclude from work until:***

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
- At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*

**If symptomatic individuals were never tested for COVID-19 but have an alternate, clinical diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza, strep, norovirus, etc.), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.**

### Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions

*After returning to work, individuals should:*

- 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 primary care provider if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen

### Footnotes

*For more information for employers planning and response for COVID-19, please refer to the CDC's [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) and OSHA's [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#).*

For more information please contact Inyo County COVID-19 Business Liaison, Leslie Chapman, at 760-937-7958