

Return to Work Policy

Dustin Gentry, MD, MBA
Winston Medical Center

The policy is quite strict. I don't expect a regular business to abide by it. Institutions (correctional facilities, etc) and LTC facilities I think should use a policy at least as strict as this one as long as there is not a staffing crisis and until we have evidence regarding transmission rates after recovery. Hopefully, the evidence will come down the pipeline soon, and this policy can be relaxed greatly with a clear conscience. A staffing crisis **changes everything** as does new evidence.

The policy is fluid until we have solid evidence and may certainly change in the near future.

The policy categorizes employees by "test result" and "reason for test". The Negative category is the most challenging because there is minimal guidance from anyone. The danger is the anecdotally high and unknown false-negative rate.

1. Negative Test:
 - a. Tested for casual exposure (as defined by CDC, see their chart) – Continue work with caution and monitor symptoms daily.
 - b. Tested for significant exposure (as defined by CDC, see their chart) – Quarantine 14 days. RTW if asymptomatic.
 - c. Tested for screening purposes (no symptoms or exposure) – RTW immediately.
 - d. Tested for mild symptoms (no fevers greater than 100.4F and otherwise mild symptoms) – consider this result as true negative. RTW with 7/3 strategy cautiously.
 - e. Tested for severe symptoms (Temp greater than 100.4F or other severe symptoms) – consider this result as a false negative. RTW with 14/3 strategy
2. Positive Test:
 - a. Require 2 negative tests 24 hours apart and resolution of symptoms.
 - b. In staffing crisis policy may be augmented to 14/3 strategy with caution and in conference with a Staff Physician. This can be done selectively to determine how many workers are needed and who is able, willing, and least contagious.
3. Not Tested:
 - a. Severely Symptomatic (Fever 100.4F or other severe symptoms) - Consider positive. RTW with 14/3 strategy.
 - b. Mildly symptomatic (Temp Less than 100.4F and subjectively mild symptoms) - Consider positive. RTW with 14/3 strategy. In a staffing crisis may return cautiously with 7/3 strategy.
 - c. Asymptomatic with casual exposure (as defined by CDC, see their chart) – Continue work with caution and monitor symptoms daily.
 - d. Asymptomatic with significant exposure (as defined by CDC, see their chart) – Quarantine 14 days. RTW if asymptomatic.

Here is link to exposure chart by CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

Definitions:

7/3 strategy - 7 days since onset of symptoms and 3 days symptom resolution

14/3 strategy - 14 days since onset of symptoms and 3 days symptom resolution