



Department of Public Health

MAYOR
Oscar Leeser

GUIDANCE ON RETURN TO WORK FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS IN EL PASO, TX UPDATED (01/18/2021)

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Except in rare situations, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to determine if Healthcare Workers (HCW) and First Responders (FR) can return to work. The City of El Paso Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) recommend the symptom- or time-based strategy for discontinuation of self-isolation in alignment with the CDC.

Symptom-based method (no severe illness or severe immunocompromise)

Return to work following:

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed **WITHOUT** fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Improvement in symptoms

Symptom-based method (severe illness or severe immunocompromise)

Return to work following:

- At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*. **AND**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed **WITHOUT** fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Improvement in symptoms

Time-based method: for healthcare personnel with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms:

Maintain isolation until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their most recent positive COVID-19 diagnostic test **AND**
- Continue without having any symptoms (assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.)

- If a case has a **severe immunocompromising condition** without symptoms, at least **20 days** should have passed *since the date of first positive specimen collected*.

Angela Mora – Health Director

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NOTE: If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy should be used based on the date of symptom onset.

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OPTIONAL: Test-Based Strategy for HCW or FR to Return to Work Sooner.

In some instances, a test-based strategy could be considered to allow HCP to return to work earlier than the recommended isolation time used by the symptom-based strategy.

This test-based strategy criteria should only be used in the following circumstances:

HCW or FR who are NOT symptomatic:

- NEGATIVE Result of one test using an FDA-authorized molecular viral assay to detect SARS-CoV-2 RNA performed 5-7 days after first positive test.

NOTE: If test performed at 5-7 days is POSITIVE, then follow time-based strategy.

QUARANTINE GUIDELINES HCW or FR AFTER HIGH-RISK EXPOSURE

HCW and FR may return to work after a High-Risk exposure if all of the following applies:

- HCW / FR remain asymptomatic; **AND**
- NEGATIVE Result of one test using an FDA-authorized molecular viral assay to detect SARS-CoV-2 RNA performed 5-7 days after High-risk exposure.

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