

CDC Provides Updated Recommendations on COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Times

DECEMBER 28, 2021

On December 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) provided new guidance regarding its recommended times for quarantine and isolation for individuals exposed to COVID-19. Employers that have chosen to follow the CDC’s advisory guidance to date may consider revising their practices in light of the CDC’s update.

Isolation Timeframe Following Infection

Regardless of vaccination status, if any individual has a confirmed COVID-19 infection, the CDC encourages that individual to isolate for 5 days and, if asymptomatic at that time, the individual may leave isolation while continuing to wear a mask when around others for an additional 5 days. Individuals who have a fever 5 days after their infection was confirmed should continue to stay home until the fever resolves.

Quarantine Timeframes Following Exposure

Per the new guidance, individuals that were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and (a) are unvaccinated or (b) are vaccinated but more than 6 months removed from their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines (or more than 2 months removed from their dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and are not boosted should quarantine for 5 days, followed by an additional 5 days of mask use when around others.

For individuals who have received booster doses of their respective vaccines, the CDC advises that, while quarantine is not necessary following an exposure, these individuals should nevertheless wear a mask for 10 days after exposure.

If quarantining is infeasible, the CDC strongly recommends that all exposed individuals wear a well-fitting mask at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure to mitigate COVID-19’s spread. Additionally, the CDC notes that it would be best practice to test for the virus 5 days after exposure and, if symptoms occur, to quarantine until a negative test confirms that the symptoms are not COVID-19 related.

Although the CDC’s guidance is advisory, employers should stay apprised of state or local rules that impose mandatory masking and/or vaccination requirements.

Please reach out to Benesch’s Labor & Employment Practice Group for more information.

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