

New Quarantine Guidance Affects Employers

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New quarantine recommendations in Pennsylvania mean employers have new standards as to how long their employees need to be away from their physical place of work.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health [updated its COVID-19 quarantine guidance](#) late last week to align with recent changes made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The changes mean employers should update their policies to incorporate the new guidance and become familiar with its intricacies.

In a press release to health care providers, the department recommended that asymptomatic individuals who were in close contact with infected persons should quarantine for 10 days without testing. Previous guidance had recommended a full 14-day quarantine following exposure.

The department also offered an alternative of seven-day quarantine, if the asymptomatic individual has a negative test after the fifth day of quarantine. The department and the CDC continue to recommend that individuals monitor their symptoms for a full 14 days following exposure. As a reminder, a "close contact" is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, from two days before illness onset or specimen collection until the infected person isolates.

The new quarantine timeline applies to all quarantine orders issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, including the travel orders issued before Thanksgiving.

With the new guidance in place, employers can bring quarantined employees back to work at least four days earlier than they could previously, and as much as a week earlier with a negative test result. Employers should make this new guidance clear to quarantined employees who may be expecting to be out of work for two weeks, and make it clear to employees who have to enter quarantine.

If you have questions about the updated quarantine rules, please contact [Joshua Schwartz](#), [Martin Siegel](#), or any of the attorneys in the [Employment Practice Group](#).

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and, in many cases, can be controversial. Any views expressed in this alert are not intended to advocate for or endorse a particular governmental response to the pandemic.

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