



Return to Work Protocol

UPDATE: This advice has been updated to account for the CDC's and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's revised guidance.

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Emergency

I. Purpose

In response to the public health emergency related to the novel coronavirus and its related disease, COVID-19, the Town of East Bridgewater ("Town") provides this protocol for all those experiencing symptoms or who have tested positive for COVID-19. This protocol aims to establish a procedure for employees as they prepare to return to work.

This policy mirrors the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Guidelines for return to work for healthcare workers who have experienced symptoms or who have tested positive for COVID-19.

II. Procedure

Presenting Symptoms of COVID-19:

If an employee suffered from a fever and cough, was not positively diagnosed for COVID-19 and has recovered, they can return to work under the following conditions:

- A minimum of 24 hours has passed since recovery, with no fever for at least 24 hours. Employees also must have no abnormal temperature for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medicines like aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen.
- Their respiratory symptoms have improved
- 10 days have passed since symptoms first started

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 with No Symptoms:

If an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 but has not presented symptoms or become ill, they must remain isolated following their diagnosis. Based on the CDC guidelines, they can return to work after meeting the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test
- Wear a mask or other covering nose and mouth to limit exposure

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 but Not Requiring Hospitalization:

If an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 and has become mildly or moderately ill due to the virus but did not require hospitalization, they can return to work after meeting the following conditions:

- At least ten days have passed since symptoms began
- They have experienced no abnormal fever for a minimum of 24 hours. Employees must have no significant temperature for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medicines like aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen.
- Other symptoms have improved
- The employee exhibits no symptoms of COVID-19

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Requiring Hospitalization:

These individuals pose the highest risk of spreading infection across the workforce. The CDC recommends that any employee who has received a positive test and has been hospitalized receive rigorous testing before returning to work because they may experience longer periods of viral detection than those with mild or moderate symptoms.

Exposure to a Confirmed COVID-19 case:

Employees who have had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 but have not yet tested positive themselves should talk to their health care provider about next steps, including the need to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Close contact is defined as:

- Living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Has been within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or has been in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If an employee is self-quarantining, they must immediately report this to their immediate supervisor.

Employees who are home for quarantine but who are not sick may be allowed to telework.

If the employee subsequently develops symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19, the directions for confirmed cases should be followed.

If the employee completes self-quarantine without developing symptoms, they should talk to their supervisor about next steps in order to return to work.

III. Reporting

The criteria listed above for employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 and all those experiencing symptoms without a positive test shall be reported to the Town Administrator before said employee's return to work.

Please note: the above criteria are based on CDC/MaDPH guidelines and are subject to change as the public health emergency continues to develop. Any changes to these criteria, or protocol in general, shall be communicated to the affected employees as soon as practicable.