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## Client Alert: New CDC Guidance for Essential Employees Exposed to COVID-19

13 Apr 2020

[David L. Kelleher](#)

In an effort to ensure the continuity of essential operations while maintaining a safe work environment, the Centers for Disease Control issued guidance for when critical infrastructure employees may be permitted to work following a potential exposure to COVID-19.

A potential exposure means household contact or non-household contact of six feet or less with a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, including contact in the 48-hour time period before the individual became symptomatic.

Importantly, the CDC's recommended precautions apply only so long as the potentially exposed worker remains asymptomatic. If the worker becomes symptomatic during the day, the worker should be sent home immediately, and surfaces in the person's workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Other workers who were in contact with the now symptomatic worker during the prior 48 hours, whether by direct contact or by contact within the 6-foot social distancing rule, should be identified and considered potentially exposed.

For employers, the CDC recommends:

- Prescreening each potentially exposed worker for a temperature or other symptoms at the beginning of each work day, ideally before the worker enters the facility.
- Monitoring each worker regularly during the day for symptoms.
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting work spaces, common areas and shared electronic equipment.
- Working with facilities maintenance staff to increase the rate of air exchange in the work space.

For employees, the CDC recommends:

- Self-monitoring for symptoms prior to and throughout the work day.
- Wearing face masks at all times in the workplace for 14 days following the last exposure.
- Practicing social distancing always, including the 6-foot minimum distancing, as work duties permit.
- Refraining from sharing headsets, food and utensils, and other objects that are near the mouth or nose.

The CDC's *Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19*, can be found [here](#), or at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

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