



**Metropolitan
Transit
System**

Memorandum

DATE: January 6, 2022
TO: All Employees
FROM: Jeff Stumbo, Chief Human Resources Officer (EEO Officer)
SUBJECT: Revised COVID-19 Return to Work Guidance

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), Cal/OSHA, the California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”), and San Diego County Health and Human Services have updated their guidance governing isolation following testing positive for COVID-19 and quarantine after exposure to someone who has tested positive. Accordingly, MTS is revising its policy on when employees may return to work following testing positive for COVID-19 or having close contact with someone who has tested positive. **It is important to note that there is no change to the rule requiring that employees who have COVID-19 symptoms stay home until they take a test with negative results and their symptoms resolve. Further, it is crucial that employees who test positive for or are exposed to COVID-19 continue to inform their supervisor immediately.** These rules apply regardless of vaccination status.

The masking requirements outlined in this policy are in addition to MTS’s general guidance on facial coverings at work. In other words, if general masking requirements loosen in the future, this masking guidance for individuals who are exposed or test positive will still apply.

Summary of Changes:

“**Isolation**” protocols apply to persons who test positive for COVID-19 and “**Quarantine**” protocols apply to persons who have had “close contact” with someone who tests positive during their “high-risk period”.

Isolation – Employees who test positive

Regardless of vaccination status, employees who tested positive prior to this change were required to stay away from work for a minimum of 10 days from the date they tested positive or developed symptoms. This revised policy allows employees who have tested positive to return to work if they take and pass a COVID-19 test with the specimen collected five (5) or more days after the initial positive test **and** their symptoms are resolving **and** no fever is present. It is strongly recommended that rapid COVID-19 tests (antigen tests) be used for follow-up testing because PCR test results may remain positive for up to 90 days. The on-site testing MTS conducts is PCR testing. If the employee returns to work, they must wear a well-fitting N-95 mask or other appropriate face covering for a minimum of 10 days after the initial positive test. MTS has N-95 masks available for all employees. Please ask your supervisor or department head, or if you are in the Mills Building, stop by the 9th floor reception desk.



Employees who continue to test positive, or are unable to test between days five and ten, may return to work after day ten if no fever is present and symptoms are resolving.

Employees who have tested positive must complete the attached COVID-19 Positive / Close Contact Return to Work Form (COVID RTW Form) and submit it for approval prior to returning to work.

Quarantine – Employees who are exposed

Exposure means “close contact” with person(s) who have tested positive for COVID-19 during their “high-risk period”.

Definitions:

Close contact is being within six (6) feet of a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or greater in any 24-hour period within or overlapping with the high-risk exposure period regardless of the use of face coverings.

High-risk Exposure Period for persons who have developed symptoms is from two (2) days before they first developed symptoms until 10 days after symptoms first appeared. For asymptomatic persons, it is from two (2) days before until 10 days after the specimen for their first positive test for COVID-19 was collected.

Booster eligible means two (2) months have elapsed since the first dose of the J&J vaccine or six (6) months have elapsed since the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.

Employees who are **fully-vaccinated and have received a booster dose** or are **vaccinated and not yet eligible for a booster shot** may continue to work following exposure if they are not experiencing symptoms. It is recommended, but not required, that the exposed employee test five (5) days after the most-recent exposure. Following the most-recent exposure, the employee must wear a N-95 mask or other appropriate face covering and maintain six feet of distance from others at the workplace for 14 days.

Unvaccinated employees (including those who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days) and employees who are **booster eligible but have not received a booster shot** must quarantine for five (5) days following their most-recent exposure. On the fifth day of quarantine, they should take a COVID-19 rapid test and they may return to work if the results are negative and they have no symptoms. Following the most-recent exposure, the employee must wear a N-95 mask or other appropriate face covering and maintain six feet of distance from others at the workplace for 14 days.

Employees are responsible for abiding by quarantine rules following exposure regardless of whether exposure occurs outside of work. Department managers are responsible for enforcing quarantine protocols for known at-work exposure.

If you have any questions about this policy, or would like to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Joshua Sam Ramos, Human Resources Assistant II.

Attachment(s):

1. COVID-19 Positive / Close Contact Return to Work Form (COVID RTW Form)

cc: All Agency Bulletin Boards, COVID-19 Web Pages, Text to All Employees