



December 29, 2020

New York State Department of Health Issues Updated Guidance on Quarantine for Persons Exposed to COVID-19

On December 2, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") provided options for persons exposed to COVID-19, and without symptoms, to shorten the recommended quarantine period. On December 26, 2020, the New York State Department of Health ("DOH") updated its guidance to align certain of its requirements for release from quarantine with those of CDC.

CDC Guidance

Although the CDC still recommends a quarantine period of 14 days for individuals exposed to COVID-19, based on local circumstances and resources, the following options are acceptable alternatives to shorten the quarantine period:

- Quarantine can end after 10 days, without testing, if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring; or
- Quarantine can end after 7 days, with testing up to 48 hours before ending quarantine, if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. This option assumes diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available.

Under both options, daily monitoring of symptoms and masking must be continued for the full 14-day period.

New York State DOH Guidance

Consistent with the CDC's updated guidance, New York now permits persons exposed to COVID-19 to end quarantine after 10 days, without testing, if no symptoms have been reported during the quarantine period. In addition, the following additional requirements must be met:

- Daily monitoring of symptoms must be continued for the full 14 days;
- Strict adherence to hand hygiene and use of face coverings must continue for 14 days;
- If any symptoms develop, individuals must immediately self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider or local public health authority.

This guidance applies only to individuals who have not tested positive to COVID-19. Those who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate according to the DOH guidance to discontinue home isolation for persons with COVID-19.

Currently, New York has not adopted the CDC's second option to test out of quarantine on day 7 for those exposed to COVID-19.

Application to Travelers

The updated guidance applies to travelers who are not essential workers and/or who do not test out of the quarantine restrictions set forth in Executive Order 205.2.

Application to Health Care Personnel

The updated guidance also applies to health care personnel working at nursing home or adult care facilities certified as EALRs or ALPs who were exposed to COVID-19. Such individuals may be released from quarantine sooner under the new guidance, but must remain furloughed from work for 14 days. All other personnel in healthcare and other direct care settings should continue to follow the DOH's Revised Protocols for Personnel in Healthcare and Other Direct Care Settings to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection.

Takeaway for Employers

This new guidance should reduce the burden on employers and help to increase employee compliance with quarantine requirements.

If you have any questions regarding this alert, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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