

Temporary exemption for critical workers in critical industries – Q&A

Can a COVID positive person leave isolation and return to work after day 7 if they have no symptoms without needing a negative test?

Yes. An individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 does not need an additional test to be released from isolation, provided they have no symptoms.

The day of their positive test is day 0. If they still have symptoms at day 7, they must isolate for an additional 3 days (for a total of 10 days isolation).

Once they have completed their isolation period they can return to work.

[See Isolation | Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\).](#)

Is there an exemption for workers who are COVID-19 positive but asymptomatic and willing to work?

No. Any person who is [COVID-19 positive](#) must isolate for 7 days and is not permitted to work.

Could a person who has recovered from COVID-19 and finished their isolation period become a close contact in the future?

Yes, but only after 30 days from the end of their isolation period.

Cases released from isolation do not need to quarantine if they are re-exposed to a case in their household in the month after their diagnosis.

After one month cases should get retested if they develop symptoms and quarantine if a household member tests positive for COVID-19.

If a positive case cannot be isolated from others in the household/accommodation, when does the close contact period start and when is the close contact released from isolation?

Where positive workers cannot be isolated from others in the household (e.g. in a share house with dormitory style sleeping arrangements and shared facilities) their isolation period commences on their last date of exposure to the positive person.

Their 7 day isolation commences from the day the positive person reaches day 8 and is no longer considered positive, meaning the close contact will isolate for a further 7 days and return to work on day 15, unless [eligible for the temporary exemption](#).

What accommodation options are available to isolate positive cases and/or close contacts?

Businesses must have outbreak management plans that include appropriate isolation facilities for positive cases and/or close contacts.

Existing accommodation may need to be reconfigured to keep workers separate.

Businesses are encouraged to work together to explore options to pool available accommodation or access additional accommodation facilities for positive cases or close contacts.

As a last resort, limited places in government managed hotel quarantine may be available for positive workers who are unable to isolate in their existing accommodation. Public Health will assess whether this is required on a case by case basis and initiate the referral process. Businesses may be required to arrange transport to the accommodation for the affected workers.

What obligations do Approved Employers have to their workers affected by COVID-19?

Approved Employers have [worker welfare obligations](#) and must make sure all basic needs of workers are met, including accommodation, food, water and access to medical care.

Workers who are isolating may be eligible for the [Australian Government's Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#).