January 21, 2021

End of Isolation Guidance for Employers after Employees’ Positive COVID-19 Test

To address the increased strain on public health resources due to the surge of COVID-19 cases, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) will be prioritizing the investigation of cases in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ADH will no longer issue documentation stating when an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 may return to work or other obligations. Employers are to use the following guidance on isolation in determining their own return to work policy:

**Individuals with COVID-19 who have no symptoms may end isolation once:**

- 10 days have passed and no symptoms have developed since the date of positive test.

**Individuals with COVID-19 who have mild symptoms may end isolation once:**

- 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND
- Have not had any fever of 100.4°F or higher for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND
- Symptoms, such as cough or shortness of breath, are resolved or improving.

**Individuals with COVID-19 who have weakened immune systems or have been hospitalized may end isolation once:**

- 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND
- Have not had any fever of 100.4°F or higher for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND
- Symptoms, such as cough or shortness of breath, are resolved or are improving.

All individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 should also continue to wear a face mask and practice social distancing after their isolation has ended.

In addition, close contacts of all cases (defined as individuals who were within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, with or without a facemask during the positive patients’ infectious period) should self-quarantine and self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Testing (PCR or antigen) for close contacts is recommended no earlier than 5 days after the last date of exposure to the positive case.

Individuals who have completed their isolation period may receive the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with CDC recommendations and the state’s COVID-19 vaccination plan, which can be found at this link.