



HQ Return to Work Guidelines Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Revised 05 JAN 2022

To help prevent the spread of 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) the Department of Defense (DoD), in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), have instituted the following transmission-based precautions:

- 1) Stay-home-from-work policy
- 2) Quarantine or Restriction of Movement (ROM)
- 3) Isolation

Personnel who have COVID-19 related symptoms should notify their supervisor and stop going to work immediately.

Personnel who are infected with COVID-19 should be placed under isolation at a healthcare facility, home, or another designated isolation facility. Similarly, close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual should be tested and self-quarantine. Those exempt include recovered COVID-19 positive persons 90 days after their positive test and fully vaccinated personnel per ref (a) and [CDC guidance](#).

The following guidelines are available in flowchart format at www.southcom.mil/coronavirus to aid staff with their specific scenarios.

Close Contact / Quarantine / Restriction of Movement

- **All close contacts¹ should get tested for COVID-19 at day 3-5 after exposure.** If symptoms occur before day 3-5, individuals should get tested immediately and isolate until a negative test returns.
- **Unvaccinated close contacts OR those who are greater than 6 months past their second mRNA dose or more than 2 months after their J&J dose and are not boosted will quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days. The date of last exposure is considered day 0 and quarantine begins on the next calendar day.**
- Close Contacts who meet the following criteria are not required to quarantine:
 - Asymptomatic, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and are fully vaccinated
 - Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated, and who have received a booster dose of vaccine
- All Close Contacts, regardless of vaccination or quarantine status, must wear a well-fitted mask at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure.
- Travelers from foreign countries will ROM per DOD guidance. Unvaccinated and/or symptomatic travelers will ROM for 7 days after travel. **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated travelers are exempt from ROM requirements. All travelers will test for COVID-19 3-5 days following international travel regardless of vaccination status.**
- Exceptions to policy (ETPs) for ROM for mission essential activities per DOD FHP Supplement #18 must be approved by the SOUTHCOM Chief of Staff. ETP requests will include COVID-19 test results, vaccination status, and risk to mission.
- An individual who is in close contact with a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 does not automatically require to quarantine **unless** the PUI's viral test result is confirmed as positive.
- While awaiting results, supervisors may temporarily restrict close contacts of PUIs. Supervisors should consult with medical staff to determine potential risk. Isolated individuals **should not return to work until instructed by their supervisor.**

Person Under Investigation (PUI)

- A PUI is defined as an individual with signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19, who either **has a pending test or is advised to get tested**. Personnel identified as a PUI are undergoing a medical evaluation and may not return to work until cleared by their medical provider per ref (a). The medical provider will make a determination whether the PUI: a) tested positive for COVID-19 or b) may have another acute respiratory illness.

Confirmed or Probable Case of COVID-19

All COVID-19 positive cases regardless of vaccination status will stay home for 5 days after the date of specimen collection. The date of specimen collection is considered day 0; day 1 of isolation begins on the next calendar day. If they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving after 5 days, they can discontinue isolation. All COVID-19 positive cases will continue to strictly wear a mask around others and maintain at least 6 feet separation from others for an additional 5 days. If they fever, they continue to stay home until their fever resolves.

Depending on factors to include local and installation infection rates, an antigen test may be utilized after completion of the 5 day isolation prior to returning to work. Positive cases will be informed of the current status of this testing requirement. If there are questions about whether an antigen test is recommended, please contact the SCSG office.

In general, retesting is not recommended within the first 3 months after diagnosis, unless new COVID-19 symptoms develop without alternative diagnosis identified.

Other Acute Respiratory Illness

Personnel (including fully vaccinated and previously recovered COVID+ persons) who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to **stay home and not return to work** until 7 days after symptoms first appeared, and 24 hours has passed since the following are met without symptom-altering medications:

- No fever without the use of fever-reducing medications or feverish symptoms (e.g. shivering, chills, body aches, etc.)
- Improvement of other illness symptoms (sore throat, persistent cough, sinus congestion, fatigue, etc.)

References: a) USSOUTHCOM Guidance for Close Contacts of COVID Positive Individuals;

b) USSOUTHCOM Guidance for COVID Positive Individuals

For Return to Work flowcharts and more information, please visit the [SOUTHCOM COVID-19 Resource Page](#).