



North Oaks COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

Where can I find guidance on COVID-19 and Return to Work criteria?

North Oaks Occupational Health Services can discuss your specific concerns and needs and provide you with guidance to make informed decisions about your workforce. Call us at (985) 230-5726 or email OHS@northoaks.org.

The CDC, OSHA, Louisiana Department of Health, and North Oaks Health System have issued criteria and specific guidance for employers and the general public. Here are great resources:

- **North Oaks Health System:** <https://www.northoaks.org/covid-19/>
- **OSHA:** www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/
- **CDC:** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html
- **Louisiana Department of Health (LDH):** <http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus/>
- **Open Safely Louisiana:** <https://opensafely.la.gov/OpenSafely.aspx> (register your business and learn more)

What are the symptoms I should look for?

COVID-19 patients have had a wide range of symptoms reported –from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. COVID-19 symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This is not an all-inclusive list of symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

What should I do if I suspect an employee has symptoms of COVID-19?

- Separate and isolate the employee from other people immediately
- The employee should wear a cloth covering or mask being careful to cover the nose and mouth.
- Advise the employee to wash his/her hands frequently, avoid touching high contact surface areas and cover/contain coughs and sneezes.
- The employee should seek medical advice immediately by calling his or her primary care provider or the North Oaks COVID Hotline at **(985) 230-2778** to be screened and/or to set up an appointment.
- Clean and disinfect all high contact surface areas with a CDC and/or EPA recommended disinfectant.
- Request that the employee self-isolate at home and away from others.

*The employee can return to work **only after being cleared by a health care provider.***

Should I have my employees tested?

At this time, testing is reserved for those in high risk populations (elderly population, immune-compromised, cancer patients and diabetics) due to limited test kits and capacity. Testing can accomplish two things: (1) confirm diagnosis of the coronavirus, and/or (2) confirm antibodies from a past coronavirus infection.



Concerns About Testing

- An active infection may be present before a test is performed.
- The infection may be at a level lower than the sensitivity of the test equipment (early stages of infection).

For these reasons, monitoring for signs and symptoms and taking quick action to counter a suspected infection is important, whereas testing will help the health care practitioner confirm the reason for the signs and symptoms. Until testing equipment, supplies and technology become more widely available and accessible, being proactive in preventing infection and protecting your workforce is key.

What proactive steps can I take to protect my workforce and my customers?

Follow [CDC Guidelines for Businesses and Employers](#).

- Perform temperature checks daily on employees. If employee has fever greater than or equal to 100.5°F, they should be referred to their primary care provider or call the North Oaks COVID Hotline at (985) 230-2778 for evaluations.
- Monitor employees for symptoms.
- Wear face masks correctly at all times (cover nose, mouth and chin).
- Create a workplace and business where social distancing is possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently.
- Improve workplace ventilation.
- Use signage as a reminder to wear masks, wash hands and insure proper social distancing.
- Install barriers between the employee and customer, if possible.
- **Create a strong relationship with your local health care system and partner with them to help with early detection of exposures, mitigate any concerns and educate your workforce.**

What if I have an employee that was sick and has recovered?

Per LDH, a person who had COVID-19 symptoms and was directed to care for themselves at home may end self-isolation and **return to work when at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery** and meet the following requirements:

- Fever-free without using fever-reducing medications for 3 days (72 hours)
- Show improvement in respiratory symptoms including no longer coughing or having shortness of breath
- It has been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared
- Cleared by a medical professional.

Who can I contact for more information?

North Oaks Occupational Health Services can answer your questions. Call (985) 230-5726 or email OHS@northoaks.org. As a long-standing partner in the business community, North Oaks Health System is here to personally help you and your business with all your Occupational Health and Safety needs.