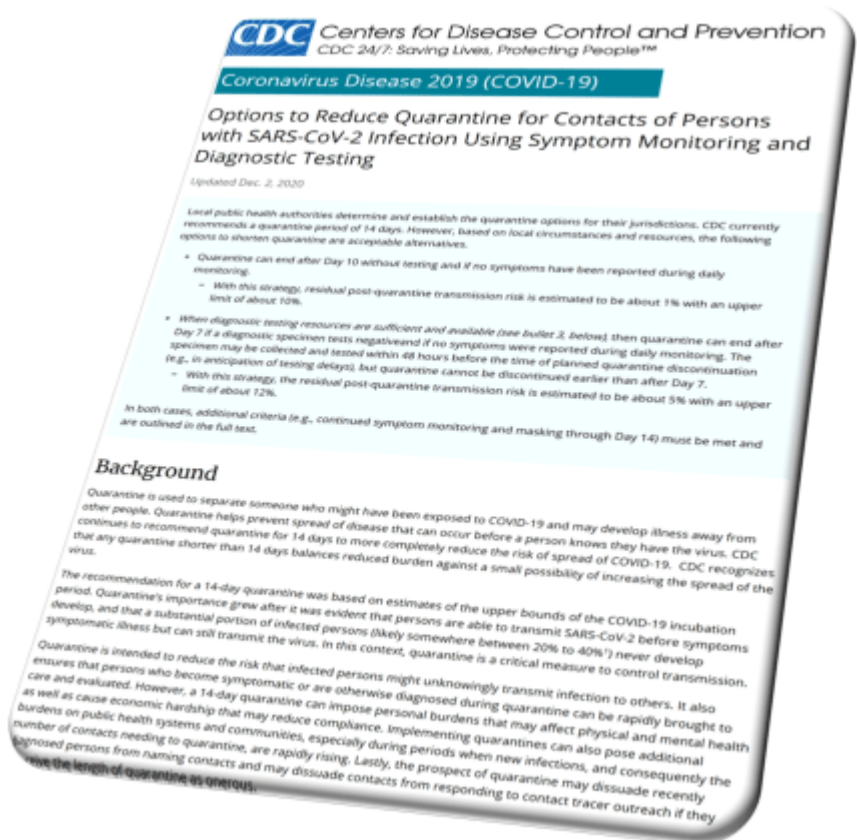


DECEMBER 2, 2020 | LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

# CDC Updates Return-to-Work Guidance Again – Reduces Quarantine Time

By Conn Maciel Carey’s [COVID-19 Task Force](#)

As we noted in a [Client Alert last month](#), the CDC issued its new guidance for “Close Contacts” in a way that would make quarantine circumstances much more likely; i.e., CDC’s new definition of close contact makes it explicit that the 15-minute exposure period (i.e., within 6-feet of an infected individual for 15 minutes) should be assessed based on a cumulative amount of time over 24 hours, rather than just a single, continuous 15-minute interaction.



Today, the [CDC issued new guidance](#) that would reduce the duration of many quarantines from 14 days to 10

days and, in some cases to 7 days. Specifically, CDC identified the following options as acceptable alternatives to a 14-day quarantine:

- Quarantine can end after **Day 10** without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
- If testing is available, then quarantine can end after **Day 7** if a respiratory specimen tests negative and no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7; i.e., testing should be initiated no earlier than Day 5 after the close contact exposure occurs.

In either scenario, additional criteria (e.g., continued symptom monitoring and masking through Day 14) must continue.

Note, however, some states and counties (through executive orders, health department mandates, state OSH Plan emergency rules, etc.) have specific return-to-work criteria that conflict with this new guidance. Confirmation that this new recommended return-to-work criteria from CDC is acceptable at the local or state level may be necessary before you update your policies.