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CDC Relaxes 14-Day Self-Quarantine Recommendation for Essential Employees Exposed to COVID-19

On April 8, the CDC issued a new, relaxed guidance for critical infrastructure workers who have been exposed to a person diagnosed with or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. A major departure from prior relevant guidance, the CDC no longer recommends that such employees be sent home and quarantined for 14 days. Instead, they may continue to work so long as they remain asymptomatic and certain precautionary measures are taken.

When employees have been exposed, which CDC defines as being in the same household as or “having close contact within six feet of” an individual confirmed or “suspected” of having COVID-19, the CDC advises employers to take the following precautions:

- prescreen such employees by taking temperatures ideally before they enter the facility;
- advise such employees to self-monitor for any symptoms under the supervision of the employer’s occupational health program;
- encourage such employees to wear face masks, or, if no masks are available, “cloth face coverings,” for at least 14 days after exposure;

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- prohibit and/or discourage such employees from congregating in common workspaces, such as cafeterias and break rooms; and
- continue to implement previously advised social distancing and work surfaces cleaning/disinfection measures.

According to the guidance, employees who start experiencing COVID-19 symptoms at work should be sent home immediately and workplace surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected. Those employees who had close contact (of under six feet) with the symptomatic individual should be considered exposed, and subject to the above precautions.

If you have any questions about the CDC's most recent or other guidelines on COVID-19, please contact Sonya Rosenberg, Chad Moeller or your Neal Gerber Eisenberg attorney.

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