

Virginia Department of Health: Summary of Options for Managing COVID-19 Exposed, Asymptomatic Meat and Poultry Plant Workers

For all options, the day of a worker’s last exposure to a person with COVID-19 is counted as Day 0.

Option	Post-Exposure Management ^{1,2}	Testing Strategy Utilized? ^{3,4}	Employee Return to Work ⁴	Risk of Viral Transmission
A	Exclude from work and self-quarantine from others for 14 days after the last exposure.	Testing is not required as part of return to work criteria, but can be performed as the worker was identified as being in close contact with a person with COVID-19	On Day 15, provided the worker remains asymptomatic and, if tested, does not test positive	This is the safest option
B	Exclude from work and self-quarantine from others for 10 days after the last exposure.	Testing is not required as part of return to work criteria, but can be performed as the worker was identified as being in close contact with a person with COVID-19	On Day 11, provided the worker remains asymptomatic and, if tested, does not test positive	This option carries a little more risk than Option A
C	Exclude from work and self-quarantine from others for 7 days after the last exposure. Perform COVID-19 test on Day 5 or later.	Yes. A PCR or antigen test should be performed on Day 5 or later.	On Day 8, provided the test result for COVID-19 is available and negative, and the worker remains asymptomatic	This option carries a little more risk than Option B
D	Exclude from work and self-quarantine from others. Perform baseline testing as soon as possible after the exposure and re-test 3 days later.	Yes. A PCR or antigen test should be performed as soon as possible after the exposure is identified (baseline) and 3 days later. Continued testing is recommended every 3 days until no new cases are identified in the group (cohort) of workers being tested.	When results from baseline testing and retesting 3 days later are available and negative, and the worker remains asymptomatic	This option carries a little more risk than Option B
E	Use only if critical staffing shortages. Test at baseline. Exposed, asymptomatic workers may continue to work provided they are screened for symptoms on entry, self-monitor for signs of illness, wear a mask and wash hands frequently.	Yes. A PCR or antigen test should be performed as soon as possible after the exposure is identified (baseline) and 3 days later. Continued testing is recommended every 3 days until no new cases are identified in the group (cohort) of workers being tested.	When results from baseline testing are available and negative, and the worker remains asymptomatic	This option carries greater risk than Options A-D
F	Use only if critical staffing shortages. Exposed asymptomatic workers may continue to work provided they are screened for symptoms on entry, self-monitor for signs of illness, wear a mask and wash hands frequently.	Testing is not required as part of return to work criteria, but can be performed as the worker was identified as being in close contact with person with COVID-19	Employee does not stop working, but remains asymptomatic	This is the least desirable option and should only be used as a last resort in limited circumstances

1. For all options, workers should closely monitor for symptoms and follow other recommendations (wearing a mask, watching distance, and washing hands often) for at least 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19.
2. Close contacts who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and who have either recovered from COVID-19 or been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 might not need to quarantine. See [here](#) for more information. While [asymptomatic fully vaccinated employees](#) do not need to quarantine following an exposure, testing following an exposure and through routine workplace screening programs (if present) is still recommended.
3. Any person who tests positive for COVID-19 or develops symptoms should be excluded from the workforce and self-isolate from others. Return to work should be guided by [VDH Recommendations for Meat and Poultry Plant Workers Tested for COVID-19](#).
4. For all testing strategies, waiting for test results prior to returning to work is preferred to keep infected workers out of the workplace.