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CDC Announces Plan to Reduce Quarantine Period for “Close Contacts”

Please contact our
Carr Allison COVID-19 Response Team
with any questions you may have.

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On December 2, 2020, the CDC held a teleconference during which it announced two alternatives to reduce the quarantine period for individuals who were in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. The new recommendations are as follows:

- Individuals who do not have any symptoms of the virus may end quarantine after seven days if they have a negative COVID-19 test. The CDC stated that either the PCR (48-hour result) or “rapid” antigen test (15-minute result) are acceptable and should be taken within 48 hours of the end of the quarantine period.
- Individuals without symptoms may end quarantine after ten days without a negative test.

Keep in mind that the CDC recently revised the definition of “close contact.” Previously, the CDC defined close contact as being within six feet of an infected individual for fifteen consecutive minutes. The revised guidance defines close contact as being within six feet of an infection individual for a total of fifteen minutes over a 24-hour period beginning two days before the infected individual’s onset of symptoms. This increases the investigative burden on employers trying to determine which employees should be sent home to quarantine.

The guidance from the CDC and other government agencies continues to evolve rapidly. Employers should closely monitor federal, state and local websites to stay current on recommendations regarding COVID-19 in the workplace. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to assist.