



## Process for Exceptions to COVID-19 Orders of Quarantine for Employees Determined to be "Essential"

Updated 12/31/2020

Cornell is committed to robust public health measures to mitigate the transmission and spread of COVID-19 in the Cornell community and greater Ithaca area. As such, even though NYS regulations permit an exception to a ten (10) day quarantine for employees determined to be "essential", Cornell University is implementing the following protocols to limit student, staff and faculty exposure.

Cornell has not generally employed the term "essential employee." During the pandemic and NY Pause, certain groups of employees met the New York State essential worker definitions (<https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026>) and continued to report to work on campus to support student, physical plant and safety operations, animal health, services to New York State and biomedical research needs even though others were not permitted to work on campus. For the interests of community health and safety, even though an employee may work in one of those service areas, they may not be approved to return to campus prior to the completion of the COVID-19 quarantine period.

### Procedures for Handling Employee Orders to Quarantine when NYS Regulations allow a return to work\*

1. Local Health Department orders employee to quarantine; order is communicated by employee to local HR who will [follow the process outlined in Guidance for HR Representatives and Supervisors For COVID-19 Positive, Quarantined, or Isolated Employees](#)
2. Local HR, in collaboration with the supervisor/unit manager, determines if a request under this process is appropriate, to permit the employee to return to work on campus prior to the completion of the quarantine period
  - **Note:** Until a final determination is made following the steps below, the employee must comply with the quarantine order and stay out of work until otherwise directed
3. Local unit VP/Dean, or designee, reviews and determines, understanding the potential risks, if it is appropriate to seek university approval to permit an employee or employees to return to work prior to the completion of the quarantine period.
4. Central Review Team (local unit VP/Dean or designee, local HR, Cornell Health Occupational Medicine, central HR, EHS) convenes to review the request and considers where the employee (or group of employees) works, their individual roles, interactions with the campus community, the operational impact of an absence, the reason for the quarantine and other factors as appropriate to determine if they meet Cornell COVID-19 criteria to be:
  - a. Confirmed as an employee eligible for consideration under this process
  - b. Permitted to return to work prior to completing the 10-day quarantine period
5. The Central Review Team's deliberations will be forwarded to the President and Provost for approval.
6. If confirmed as qualifying for this process and permitted to return to work the employee will be directed as follows:
  - a. In most circumstances, employees will **stay out of work at least 6 days from** last known exposure,
  - b. Complete, and receive negative results from: 2 diagnostic tests from the date of last known exposure
    - i. 1st test 4 days after last known exposure
    - ii. 2nd test 6 days after last known exposure
  - c. If both test results are negative, and the employee is asymptomatic, they may then be permitted to return to work
  - d. Complete surveillance testing each day they are scheduled to work during the quarantine period

- e. Complete the Daily Check assessment each day they are scheduled to work and follow NYS and CDC guidelines for essential employees returning to work during quarantine (e.g. take your temperature before work, wear a face mask at all times, practice social distancing in the work-place as work duties permit).

\* Some cases may be considered for an individualized approach that shall be determined in consultation with local unit VP/Dean or designee, local HR, Cornell Health Occupational Medicine, central HR, EHS, to perform an expedited review process to avoid disruption of critical services.

---