Working at Cornell

Procedures for Seeking Approval to Return to Work Prior to the Completion of Quarantine

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 fourteen (14) day quarantine for employees determined to be “essential”, Cornell University is implementing the following protocols.

Cornell has not generally employed the term “essential employee.” During the pandemic and NY Pause, certain groups of employees continued to report to work on campus to support student, physical plant and safety operations, and research needs even though others were not permitted to work on campus. For the interests of community health and safety the University has implemented a central review and approval process to determine if an employee, working in one of those service areas, will be approved to return to campus prior to the completion of the COVID-19 quarantine period.

Procedures when Seeking an Exception to Department of Health Order to Quarantine Due to Potential or Known Exposure 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, determines it is appropriate to seek university approval to permit the employee 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 role, interactions with 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 14-day quarantine period

5. If confirmed as qualifying for this process and approved to return to work by the Central Review Team, the employee will be directed as follows:

   a. Prior to returning to campus
      i. Stay out of work at least 5 days from last known exposure,
      ii. Complete, and receive negative results from: 2 diagnostic tests from the date of last known exposure
         1. 1st test 3 days after last known exposure
         2. 2nd test 5 days after last known exposure
iii. Provide proof to local HR of negative test results
b. Complete surveillance testing each day they are scheduled to work during the quarantine period
c. Complete the Daily Check assessment each day they are scheduled to work

* 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.

Procedures when Seeking an Exception to Department of Health Order to Quarantine Due to NYS Travel Advisory

1. Employee must quarantine per NYS Travel Advisory

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, determines, understanding the potential risks, it is appropriate to seek university approval to permit the employee 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 works, their role, interactions with 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 14-day quarantine period

5. If the employee is approved to return to campus by the Central Review Team, they will be directed as follows:
   a. Prior to returning to campus
      i. Upon return from travel seek diagnostic testing, and receive a negative result,
      ii. Provide proof to local HR of negative test result
   b. Complete surveillance testing each day they are scheduled to work during the quarantine period
   c. Complete the Daily Check assessment each day they are scheduled to work