RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE AFTER COVID-19 ILLNESS OR EXPOSURE

FOR NON-HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES

This guidance is to help employers determine when employees can return to work in non-healthcare settings following COVID-19 isolation or quarantine.

Category A: Individuals with symptoms and laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19

- Symptom-based strategy
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
  - At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (having no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications) and
  - Other symptoms have improved

Category B: Individuals without symptoms but have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19

- Time-based strategy
  - At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test. If they develop symptoms after their positive test, they should use the symptom-based or test-based strategy

Category C: Individuals who were exposed to COVID-19 without wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

- CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine after exposure. If the individual does not develop any symptoms during the 14 days, they can return to work.

All employees, including those returning to work, should:
- Wear a face covering if social distancing is not possible in the workplace
- Follow proper hand hygiene, respiratory, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in the trash)
- Self-monitor for symptoms and seek medical care if respiratory symptoms return or worsen

Sources:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Symptom-Based Strategy to Discontinue Isolation for Persons with COVID-19
- Georgia Department of Health Return to Work Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure for Persons Who Are Not Healthcare Personnel