



Employment and COVID-19: FAQ for COVID-19

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

Can my employer force me to go to work? Can I be fired or disciplined?

No, you cannot be fired or disciplined for not coming to work if:

- You have a confirmed case of COVID-19, even if you show no symptoms (asymptomatic)
- You have symptoms of COVID-19
- You have been exposed to an individual confirmed to have or showing symptoms of COVID-19. You could have been exposed if:
 - You had close contact with a person who has COVID-19
 - You are caring for someone in your household who has COVID-19

When can I return to work?

If you have symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19, you can return to work after*:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared or the date of the first positive test result, **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving**

**Some people may require longer isolation. Follow the direction of public health and medical professionals.*

***Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.*

If you have had a close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or have been instructed to quarantine, you can return to work after:

- 10 days have passed since last close contact with the individual*, **or**
- A public health official notifies you that quarantine is no longer necessary due to additional information about the close contact.

**This 10-day period is required regardless of any negative COVID-19 test received during the 10-day period.*

What if my employer requires or allows an employee to report to work with symptoms or with a confirmed case of COVID-19?

MIOSHA rules covering COVID-19 state: the employer will allow employees with a confirmed or possible case of COVID-19 to return to the workplace only after:

- They are no longer infectious according to the latest guidelines from the CDC, **and**
- They are released from any quarantine or isolation order by the local public health department.

If you have questions or believe your employer is violating this rule, **you should call 855-723-3219 and/or [file a complaint with MIOSHA](#).**

What if my employer disciplines, discharges, or otherwise retaliates against me for not reporting to work while having symptoms or a confirmed case of COVID-19?

Employees may be asked by employers to provide proof of a positive result or exposure. This may include documentation or making an effort to get tested for COVID-19. These are examples of reasonable requests.

If complying with these requests and the employer disciplines, discharges, or otherwise retaliates against the employee, the employee may file a complaint with MIOSHA. Under a new Michigan law, some employees may also contact an attorney and bring a civil suit against the employer.

Can I get paid while I am off work due to COVID-19?

Potentially. Under federal law, employees of private employers with fewer than 500 employees may be eligible for two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave if:

- They are quarantined as a close contact, **or**
- They are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking medical care.

Some private employers with more than 500 employees also offer paid leave for COVID-19. Contact your employer to find out what you may be eligible for.

Am I eligible for unemployment insurance benefits? If so, how do I apply?

Employees are eligible for unemployment benefits if they are not on a paid medical leave and one of the following is true:

- They are **isolating because they tested positive** for COVID-19.
- They are **quarantining because they are at elevated risk of COVID-19 OR because they may have been exposed to** someone with COVID-19.

There are two ways to file a new unemployment claim:

- Online – Visit Michigan.gov/UIA;
- Telephone – Call 1-866-500-0017. If you are hearing impaired, TTY service is available at 1-866-366-0004.

How long am I covered by these protections while I'm out?

Some employees are entitled to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave due to medical reasons, including COVID-19. For more information about these protections, you should contact your employer regarding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

What if I am caring for a family member with COVID-19, but I'm not sick?

Even if you are not sick, **you may still be eligible to take time off to care for a sick family member.**

Federal law allows certain covered employees to take two weeks of paid leave to care for sick family members. It is possible you may also qualify for unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

In Michigan, unemployment benefits are also available for workers who have an unanticipated family care responsibility for loved ones who become ill.

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