

## COVID-19 FAQ

***7. An employee's spouse was told by their employer that they may have been exposed by a co-worker to COVID-19. The spouse and our employee have had close personal contact since the spouse was told they might have been exposed to COVID-19. Should we have our employee self-quarantine? If we do have them self-quarantine, do we can we pay them using their sick and vacation pay?***

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Answers: It depends on the facts and circumstances surrounding the spouse's exposure. The CDC has established various degrees of exposure ranking them as high risk, medium risk, low risk. Low risk is defined as having a brief interaction with a patient with COVID-19. Low-risk exposures, as opposed to medium and high-risk exposures, typically do not require self-quarantine if the person who was exposed is asymptomatic. This seems like it would likely be a low-risk exposure, but you should check with your local public health agency as to any requirement to quarantine.

If your organization is required under the new Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, then you should pay the employee consistent with those provisions and final Regulations. Generally, the Act provides that covered employers must provide to all employees:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick time at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.

This federally mandated paid sick time is in addition to all other vacation, sick, PTO, or other leaves that an employer typically grants employees. An employer may not require an employee to use other leave or paid sick time before giving access to the new federally mandated paid sick time. An employer must allow an employee to use the federally required sick time first, and only after that federal paid sick time is exhausted require an employee who needs more time off to utilize their company offered sick time.

It is important to note that the final language in the law permit Employers of Health Care Providers or Emergency Responders to exclude such employees from eligibility for the paid leave provided under the Act if they wish to do so.

Here is a link to the Department of Labor Web Site for more information:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra>