



[From 15 August 2023 there are no longer any public health mandated requirements](#)

This means that there is no longer a mandatory 7-day isolation period when testing positive for COVID-19.

However, the Government still suggests that anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 (even with mild symptoms) [should still isolate for a period of 5 days.](#)

Important notes:

- COVID has not disappeared, it remains active, and people will still contract the virus.
- COVID should be considered the same as any other illness.
- The ending of the public health measures is not a green light for businesses to unilaterally change workplace policies, or have workers come to work sick.
- Any decision or change in the workplace that impacts worker health and safety requires the business to engage with its workers and their representatives.

Staying home if you're unwell

This applies regardless of what kind of illness. Employers should enable workers to stay home and recover from illness both for the wellness of the worker and to minimise the spread of illness in the workplace.

Workers should not be required to come to work sick. Sick workers can be a potential source of risk for example due to impairment or fatigue. These risks and other risks arising in the workplace due to absences from sickness must be eliminated or otherwise minimised.

Workers must be engaged in decisions about how risks are managed.

Health and safety requires engaging with workers

[Workers \(and their representatives\) have a statutory right to be engaged on all matters that impact their health and safety.](#)

Decisions to remove or change policies around keeping workplaces safe from illness are covered by this requirement.

Union delegates and health and safety representation need to be involved in these processes.

In addition, good faith employment obligations to consult with workers on matters that impact their employment apply.



Leave for COVID-related absences

Workers who are sick should be provided sick leave to recover from illness. Where workers do not have enough sick leave, you can ask your employer to provide sick leave in advance or paid special leave to cover the period of illness. Your employer must discuss this request, fairly consider it, and respond in a manner that is consistent with reasonable employment practices.

It is CTU position that annual leave is for workers rest and relaxation and should in most instances not be used to cover sickness. You cannot be forced to use annual leave as sick leave. Should you require to use annual leave to cover an absence due to illness, any leave used in this way needs your express agreement.

Please note that the COVID leave support payment (payments to cover employee absence due to isolation) has [now also ended](#).

Proof of sickness

Employers are allowed to ask for proof of sickness only if the period of absence is longer than [3 or more days](#). If an employer wants proof of sickness for a period shorter than 3 days then they must [meet the reasonable expenses](#) in obtaining proof.

For COVID this would include sourcing and undertaking a rapid antigen test (RAT) test or PCR test at the employer's expense. Anyone who reports a positive RAT or PCR test, will receive a confirmation text message from Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand. [These confirmation text messages are reliable proof of a person having COVID-19](#).

Dependents who are sick

Workers can also use sick leave to care for their dependents that are sick, the same guidance as above applies here too.