

MANAGING EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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In this article, we set out how to best manage and support an employee's return to work during the current pandemic situation. Given that there are a number of different reasons why an employee may have been absent from work, it is important to consider the employee's individual circumstances in order to manage the situation appropriately.

The employee has completed a mandatory period of quarantine/self-isolation

It is important to understand the specific reason why the employee was required to complete a period of mandatory quarantine/self-isolation. For example:

- the employee completed two weeks' quarantine following a period of overseas travel, or
- the employee completed two weeks' self-isolation due to coming in contact with another person who has tested positive for COVID-19

In either of the above situations, the employee will need to provide documentation from their treating medical practitioner to verify that they are in good health and able return to work.

The employee has been on a period of carer's leave, to care for a member of their immediate family/household who has been required to quarantine/self-isolate due to COVID-19

It is important to understand the specific reason why the individual was required to complete a period of mandatory quarantine/self-isolation, and why the employee was required to care for them. For example:

- the member of the employee's immediate family/household completed two weeks' quarantine following a period of overseas travel, or
- the member of the employee's immediate family/household completed two weeks' self-isolation due to coming in contact with another person who has tested positive for COVID-19

In either of the above situations, the employee will need to provide the employer with documentation from the immediately family/household member's treating medical

practitioner to verify that the person is in good health. The employee will also need to provide documentation from **their own** treating medical practitioner, to verify that they are in good health and able return to work.

The employee has been on a period of personal leave, after being diagnosed with and recovering from COVID-19

The employee will need to provide documentation from their treating medical practitioner, to verify that they have recovered and tested negative for COVID-19, and that they are fit to return to work in full capacity.

The employee has been on a period of carer's leave, to care for a member of their immediate family/household who was diagnosed with COVID-19

The employee will need to provide documentation from the immediate family/household member's treating medical practitioner, to verify that they have recovered and tested negative for COVID-19.

Given that the employee has been in close proximity to this person, once the person has tested negative, the employee will need to complete their own two week period of self-isolation. Following this isolation period, the employee will need to provide documentation from their own treating medical practitioner, to verify that they are in good health and able return to work.

The employee has been on a period of parental leave, and is now due to return to work

In the first instance, the employer will need to consider the employee's role, and whether any changes have been implemented as a result of the COVID-19 situation (e.g. the role may now be required to work from home). If changes have been implemented, these will need to be discussed with the employee prior to their return to work, to ensure they receive the necessary support and guidance.

Need help?

We are able to help you manage your workforce during this difficult time. Contact [Sean Melbourne](#) if your business needs legal or HR assistance.

Check out other COVID-19 resources on the Source website:
<https://www.sourcelegal.com.au/covid-19-response/>