

MEDIA RELEASE

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Workers diagnosed with Covid-19 can return to work under strict conditions

The Department of Employment and Labour has noted a number of media reports indicating that Covid-19 patients no longer need to test negative to resume work.

The Department's Chief Inspector for Health and Safety Tibor Szana said it is not correct that Covid-19 patients no longer need to test negative to resume work.

“In terms on the new directions, if a worker has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and isolated in accordance with the Department of Health Guidelines, an employer may only allow a worker to return on conditions that, the worker has completed the mandatory 14 days of self-isolation, said Szana.

Other conditions are that, the worker has to have undergone a medical evaluation confirming fitness to work if the worker had moderate or severe illness in relation to COVID-19.

Szana said it was vital for the employer to ensure that personal hygiene, wearing of masks, social distancing, and cough etiquette amongst other known best practices identified is strictly adhered to by the worker and, the employer must closely monitor the worker for symptoms upon returning to work.

He said in this instance a worker will be required to wear a surgical mask at least for the period of 21 days from the date of the diagnosis in their interest and the best interest of those around them especially.

The new directive also states that workers who have been in contact in the workplace with another worker who has been diagnosed with Covid-19, the employer must assess that worker's exposure in accordance with the Department of Health's Guidelines to ascertain whether the exposure carries a high or low risk of transmission between the workers.

“If there is low risk exposure, the employer may permit the worker to continue working using a cloth mask complying with standard precautions and, the workers symptoms must be monitored for 14 days from the first contact.

“If there is high risk of exposure the worker must remain in quarantine for 14 days, and the employer of that worker must place the worker on sick leave in accordance with clause 27.3 for that period, said Szana.

If employers need further clarity on understanding and interpreting the direction, they must feel free to contact Chief Inspector on 082 883 5737.

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“Please continue to adhere to the lockdown regulations. Stay home, wash your hands regularly and keep maintaining the social distance.”
-ENDS-

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