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The CDC Redefines the Definition of “Close Contact”

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On October 21, 2020, the [CDC updated its definition of “close contact.”](#) Close contact now means contact with an individual, within 6 feet, for an aggregate of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period. The risk associated with “close contact” starts from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to testing) until the time the individual is isolated. It no longer requires a single continuous 15-minute “contact.”

The CDC also removed the contacts’ use of facemasks as a consideration in the analysis. This decision was made “because the general public has not received training on proper selection and use of respiratory PPE, such as an N95, the determination of a close contact should generally be made irrespective of whether the contact was wearing respiratory PPE. At this time, differential determination of close contact for those using fabric face coverings is not recommended.”

Employers need to be mindful of these new guidelines when contact tracing in the workplace is required.

If you have a question about this or another employment law topic, contact [Tracy Armstrong](#) or another member of the Wilentz [Employment Law team](#).

Attorney

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Practice

- Employment Law