

Puerto Rico Department of Health Updates COVID-19 Guidelines; Issues New Reporting Form

ATTORNEYS

- Anita Montaner-Sevillano
- Miguel Rivera-Arce
- Reinaldo L. Figueroa-Matos
- Rica López de Alós
- Iraida Diez
- James D. Noël
- Héctor M. Laffitte
- Ismael A. Molina-Villarino

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Last week, the P. R. Department of Health (DOH) updated its “**Preliminary Guideline on the Criteria that Every Employer Shall Consider for the Return to Work of an Employee Suspected or Confirmed with COVID-19**” (“Guía Preliminar Sobre los Criterios que Debe Considerar Todo Patrono al Regreso de un Empleado con COVID-19, Sospechoso o Confirmado”).

The updated Guideline now incorporates the mandate of Governor Wanda Vázquez-Garced under **Executive Order 2020-060** requiring employers to notify the DOH of any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in the workplace. To facilitate the employer’s compliance with this new reporting duty, the DOH has issued a form, which can be downloaded. Any COVID-19 suspected or confirmed cases should be reported using this form and sent by email to: covidpatronos@salud.pr.gov.

The updated DOH Guideline also reiterates that:

- employers should actively encourage sick employees to stay at home,
- if the employee has COVID-19-related symptoms he/she should notify his/her supervisor and stay home,
- sick employees may not return to work until they meet the CDC requirements for discontinuing in-home isolation,
- if an employee appears to have COVID-19-related symptoms, the employer should immediately isolate the employee from other employees and send him/her home,
- if the employee is in good health, but lives with a person confirmed of having COVID-19, he/she should notify his/her supervisor and self-isolate until the CDC criteria for discontinuing in-home isolation are met.

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