

COVID-19 definition of RECOVERED

Surveillance definition:

For epidemiological/ surveillance purposes and to standardize reporting, the following simple definition of **recovered** should be used:

A person with probable/confirmed COVID-19 is known to be alive and 14 days have elapsed since diagnosis (for asymptomatic), onset of symptoms (for mild cases) or clinical stability/ supplementary oxygen stopped (for moderate-severe cases in hospital)

Note – For practical purposes, this surveillance definition does not specify resolution of fever and improvement of symptoms at the time of de-isolation or return to work. Repeat PCR testing is not required as a surveillance criterion for recovery.

For purposes of comparison:

Clinical definition:

“Recovered” is not specifically mentioned or defined in the Guideline for clinical management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 disease (version 4).

However, the following criteria are specified for de-isolation of a person with RT-PCR-confirmed COVID-19:

1. Asymptomatic patients: 14 days after initial positive test
2. 14 days after the onset of their symptoms for cases of mild disease (this is defined as SpO₂ ≥95% and respiratory rate <25 and heart rate <120 and temperature 36-39°C and mental status normal)
3. 14 days after achieving clinical stability (e.g. after supplemental oxygen was discontinued) for cases with moderate-severe disease
4. Patients who are still symptomatic at the end of their isolation period can be de-isolated provided that their fever has resolved and their symptoms have shown improvement.
5. It is not necessary to repeat PCR testing in order to de-isolate a patient.

Occupational health definition:

Similar criteria are applied to employees who are confirmed as COVID-19 cases before they can return to work. This is outlined in the DOH guideline for symptom monitoring and management of essential workers for COVID-19 (version 1).

Employees can return to work:

1. 14 days after symptom onset for cases of mild disease
2. 14 days after clinical stability (e.g. after oxygen stopped) for cases of severe disease
3. Note: PCR testing is not required for return to work (exception: if a person remains asymptomatic in quarantine after a high-risk exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case, a PCR test should be done when assessing the employee for early return to work on day 8 post-exposure).