

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

WORKPLACE TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

The following is general workplace health and safety information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Stay informed about public health recommendations related to the Coronavirus and other health threats by visiting the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

What is Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)? Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes the Coronavirus is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>

How does the Coronavirus spread? The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. The virus spreads by droplets made when people with the Coronavirus cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or be inhaled into their lungs. It may be possible that a person can get the Coronavirus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

HEALTHY HABITS TO HELP PREVENT THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>



Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others.



Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick to prevent spreading your illness to others.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent those around you from getting sick.



Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often for 20 seconds will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand rub with at least 60% Ethyl Alcohol.



Practice other good health habits.

Use regular household cleaning spray or wipe to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at home, work or school.



Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of the Coronavirus to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.



IF YOU DO GET SICK WITH THE CORONAVIRUS

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>

For confirmed Coronavirus disease cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of the Coronavirus may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of Coronavirus.

What should I do if I get sick?

- Stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible except to seek medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Wear a facemask, cover your coughs and sneezes, and clean your hands often.
- Avoid sharing personal household items and clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday.
- Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you may have, or are being evaluated for, the Coronavirus. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.
- Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.
- Patients with confirmed Coronavirus should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN SOMEONE I KNOW IS DIAGNOSED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS?

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html#precautions>

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider’s instructions for medication(s) and care. You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient’s symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed Coronavirus.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- You and the patient should wear a facemask if you are in the same room.
- Keep the air clean. Open a window in the sick room or use a fan to keep fresh air flowing.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash laundry with normal laundry soap and dry on a hot setting. Keep dirty laundry away from your face and body. Wash your hands right after touching dirty laundry.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste.



GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS TO PLAN AND RESPOND TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The following guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including the Coronavirus, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of the Coronavirus from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This guidance is based on what is currently known **about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**.

All employers should be ready to implement strategies to protect their workforce from the Coronavirus while ensuring continuity of operations. As with all illnesses, sick employees should stay home and away from the workplace, use cough and sneeze etiquette, frequently clean hands with soap and water, and routinely clean commonly touched surfaces.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS AT WORK FROM THE CDC

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

IN ADVANCE OF EMPLOYEES GETTING SICK

- **Determine whether flex working is an option:** Review human resources policies and explore whether you can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours. Supervisors should educate employees that if they become sick they should telework instead of coming into the workplace until symptoms are completely resolved.
- **Create an employee communications plan:** Establish a process to communicate the latest Coronavirus information to employees and business partners (utilize the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Workplace Tips For Employees). Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.
- **Decide how to handle spikes in absenteeism:** In some communities, early childhood programs and K-12 schools may be dismissed, particularly if Coronavirus worsens. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from school.
- **Coordinate with state and local health officials:** Coordination with **state** and **local** health officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside. Given the intensity of an outbreak may differ according to geographic location, local health officials will be issuing guidance specific to their communities. Also, employers should take the time now to learn about plans in place in each community where they have a business by contacting their local public health department.
- **Make a business continuity plan:** Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, consider digital meetings, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).



WHEN EMPLOYEES BECOME SICK

- **Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible:** Consistent with public health guidance, permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member, and that employees are aware of these policies. Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Employees should notify their supervisor if they are sick and won't be coming into the office.
- **Local decision making:** Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions based on the conditions in each locality.
- **Employee travel:** Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- **Separate sick employees:** CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately.
- **Social distancing:** Plan to minimize exposure between healthy employees and also between those employees and the public, if public health officials call for social distancing.
- **Workplace hygiene:** Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down by employees before each use.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

- **CDC's Traveler's Health Notices:** Check the **latest guidance** and recommendations for each country to which you plan to travel.
- **Outside the United States:** Sick employees should follow your company's policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas. Travel restrictions may be enacted by other countries which may limit the ability of employees to return home if they become sick while on travel status.
- **Health confidentiality:** If an employee is confirmed to have the Coronavirus infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to the Coronavirus in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed Coronavirus should refer to CDC guidance for **how to conduct a risk assessment** of their potential exposure.
- **OSHA requirements:** Identify possible work related exposure and health risks to your employees. At the time, there is no specific Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard covering the Coronavirus. However, some OSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupational exposure to the Coronavirus. OSHA has more information on how to **protect workers from potential exposures** to the Coronavirus.

