

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS 2019 (COVID-19)

Guidance for Business and Employers



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

CREATE A PLAN - STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESSES

A well-designed plan can protect your employees and minimize the impact to your business, or organization, during a disease outbreak. Now is the time to prepare for the possibility of widespread person-to-person transmission of COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control has published guidance for businesses at the "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" website. See highlights from the guidance below.

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Ask employees who are sick to stay home when sick. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure
- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and be sure that employees are aware of these policies.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick. Healthcare providers may be extremely busy and unable to provide timely documentation.

Apply infection control measures at the workplace:

- Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and handwashing in high visibility workplace areas.
- Instruct employees to clean hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or by washing for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Place hand rubs in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Routinely clean all commonly touched surfaces. Use the cleaning agents normally used in these areas.
- Separate employees who become ill during the workday in a designated space if they are awaiting transportation.



Additional Steps for Employers:

- Prepare for social distancing to prevent spread of disease. Consider allowing telecommuting, flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts) where possible.
- Be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.
- Prepare for employee absences resulting from personal illness, caring for ill family members, and school or childcare closures.
- To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described by CDC to determine risk of COVID-19.

