

CDC Guidance for Employers for the Coronavirus

The CDC [published](#) guidance for employers for planning and responding to COVID-19. Since developments concerning the virus are fluid, HR Professionals should check the CDC's website daily for updates. Recommended strategies for employers to use now include:

Encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C]).
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

Separate sick employees:

- CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately.

Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:

- Place [posters](#) that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Perform routine environmental cleaning:

- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:

- Check the CDC's [Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel.
- If 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.

Recommendations for an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan:

Some Employers may want to adopt a more systematic approach to COVID-19 understanding that there may be other public health issues like this in the future. Preparation of an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan may consist of the following steps:

- Identify possible work-related exposure and health risks to your employees. [OSHA](#) has more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures external icon to COVID-19.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations.
- Explore whether you can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies.
- Identify essential business functions, essential jobs or roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted.
- Establish a process to communicate information to employees and business partners on your infectious disease outbreak response plans and latest COVID-19 information. Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors,

and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.

- In some communities, early childhood programs and K-12 schools may be dismissed, particularly if COVID-19 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.
- Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies; employers should take the time now to learn about plans in place in each community where they have a business.

Conclusion

CCM is available to help your firm prepare an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan if you deem it appropriate. Stay well!

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