

Workplace Safety: Prevention of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Influenza & Other Infectious Diseases in the Workplace

Employers have continually faced the widespread threat of disease, such as the present and ongoing occurrence of influenza. Now the coronavirus (COVID-19) has evolved into a community spread disease, reinforcing the need for employers to take proactive steps in mitigating the spread of this or any illness.

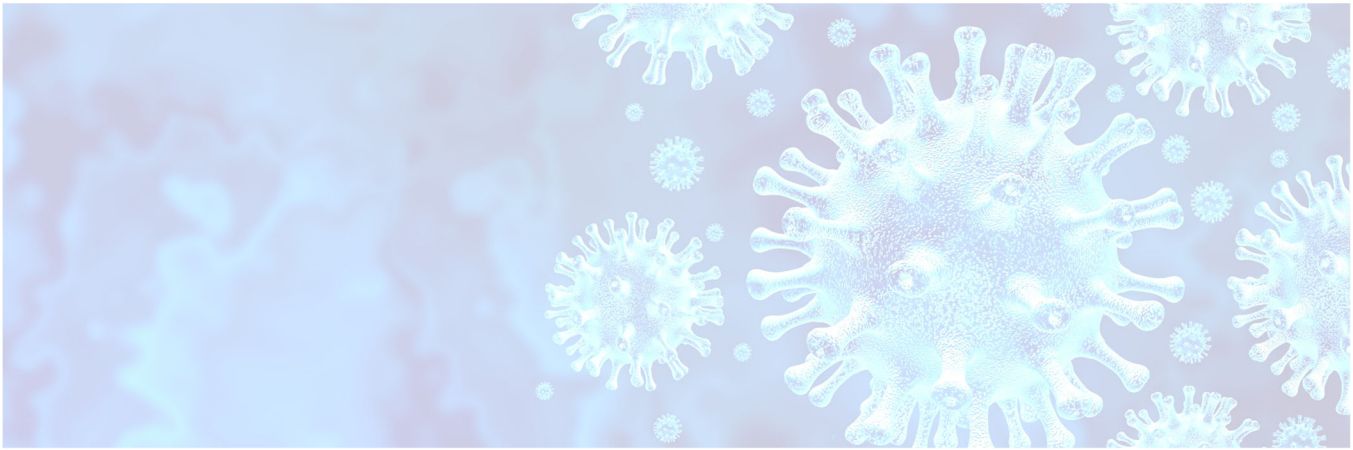
Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace is a key step for successful business continuity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the practices below as vital for the prevention of infectious diseases:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially after coming in contact with communal surfaces. Wash for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap. Hand sanitizers may be used as well.
- Keep your hands away from your face, particularly your nose, mouth and eyes.
- Disinfect surfaces that could be contaminated.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from people coughing or sneezing.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Helpful COVID-19 Resource Links

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and OSHA have offered guidance and information for employers, businesses, schools and communities in the links below:

1. CDC general guidance for businesses and employers:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html
2. OSHA guidance for general coronavirus control and prevention measures:
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#health>
3. CDC Guidance for the use and removal of contaminated PPE:
[CDC's recommendations for the appropriate sequence of putting on and removing of PPE](#)
4. CDC general guidance and information about nationwide coronavirus data:
[CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Update](#)



Additional information pertaining to the coronavirus (COVID-19)

There are still many unknown facts regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), including the time between the onset of exposure and period of infectiousness. This means the transmission of the infection may have taken place before a person tests positive and/or has demonstrated symptoms. The CDC reports that the time between exposure and symptoms occurring can be as soon as five days or as long as 14 days. This has prompted countries to implement quarantines or periods of isolation to try and mitigate the spread of the disease.

Currently, there is no vaccine or specific pharmaceutical treatment for the infection. From the limited data available, it appears older adults and people that have underlying medical conditions such as compromised immune systems may be at greater risk for more severe outcomes.

Basic hygiene practices can reduce the risk of not only contracting coronavirus (COVID-19), but also contracting other infections such as the common cold and influenza. As always, a safe and healthy workplace is key to business continuity.