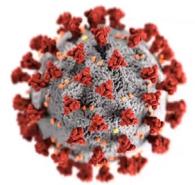




Employer's Guide to Coronavirus

(Updated 3/12/2020)



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Don't Panic, Prepare.

The coronavirus is a serious threat to both public health and the economy. As such, individuals and companies need to prepare for not if, but when, the virus makes its way to your community. Isolationism is a way to mitigate its spread, but the world can't and will not stop for this virus. Simple and safe hygiene practices in the workplace and public can help you and your employees go about living as normal a life as possible while this virus runs its course.

We've compiled the following FAQ and corresponding links to help you fight this pandemic. As Benjamin Franklin said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." That saying could not be truer in how to combat the coronavirus in your workplace, in public and at home.

Q: What is coronavirus disease (or COVID-19)?

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. This coronavirus, known as COVID-19, is an upper respiratory tract disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans. The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.

Q: What are the symptoms?

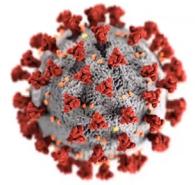
A: Symptoms, which generally appear 2 to 14 days after exposure, include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Most people who become sick do not require hospitalization. But older adults, as well as people with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart and lung disease, as well as people with compromised immune systems are more likely to require more advanced care.

Q: Who is at risk?

A: The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers risk to the general public in most communities to be **low**. A higher risk exist for people who recently traveled to China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, and people who care for patients with COVID-19.

Q: How does it spread?

A: Generally, coronaviruses are spread most often by respiratory droplets (coughing and sneezing). It is thought to be spreading from person-to-person. Therefore, someone who is actively sick with the disease can spread the illness to others (similar to the flu). CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.



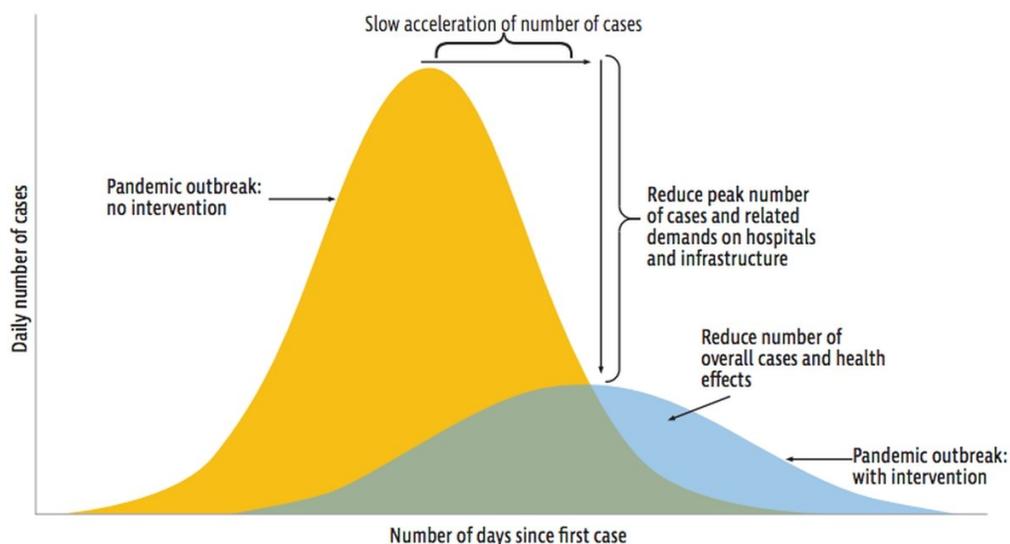
Q: Where is it spreading?

A: It was first identified in humans in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. It is now spreading worldwide, threatening to cause a pandemic. Sustained, ongoing person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in some international locations. In the U.S., several instances of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 have occurred in people with no travel history and no known source of exposure in several states.

Q: What is the government doing to prevent the spread?

A: The federal and state government's primary response to the coronavirus have been to limit or delay the spread of the virus into our communities (see chart below). These are interventions to buy more time to be more prepared and mitigate the impact as the virus spreads. The focus is on how to spread the impact of the spread over as long a period as possible so that businesses can remain open as much as possible and health care systems do not become overwhelmed. It also provides more time to develop anti-viral medication, including a protective and preventive vaccine. This can take up to 18 months to perfect the vaccine for widespread use.

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Health Director, Dr. Amy Acton, issued an order prohibiting mass gatherings in the state of Ohio to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Click here to read the full [ODH Directors Order to Limit and/or Prohibit Mass Gatherings in the State of Ohio](#).

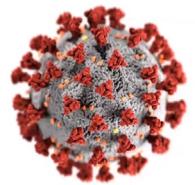


Source: Adapted from: CDC. Interim pre-pandemic planning guidance: community strategy for pandemic influenza mitigation in the United States — early, targeted, layered use of nonpharmaceutical interventions. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2007. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11425>.



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Q: What can I do to prevent it?

A: There are currently no vaccines to prevent COVID-19. The CDC has stated that a vaccine will likely take up to 18 months before it's ready for public use. Therefore, ODH and CDC recommend implementing personal prevention protection methods used to prevent flu and other infectious diseases:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; dry hands with a clean towel or air dry hands.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Clean high-touch areas – counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, nightstands – every day using household cleaning spray or wipes according to label directions.

Q: What should I do as an employer?

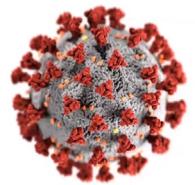
A: While there are no specific Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard covering COVID-19 there are a few requirements that may apply and be helpful to prevent occupational exposure in your workplace.

- 1) The [General Duty Clause](#) of the [Occupational Safety and Health \(OSH\) Act of 1970](#) which requires employers to furnish to each worker "employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."
- 2) OSHA's [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) standards](#) require using gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection. When respirators are necessary to protect workers, employers must implement a comprehensive respiratory protection program in accordance with the [Respiratory Protection standard](#).
- 3) Note: OSHA recordkeeping requirements mandate covered employers record certain work-related injuries and illnesses on their OSHA 300 log.
 - a. While the common cold and flu are exempt from these requirements COVID-19 is a recordable illness when a worker is infected on the job.
 - b. There is a duty to inform employees and customers if an employee tests positive for COVID-19.



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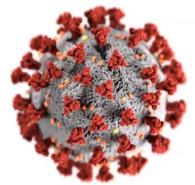


For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

- c. Click here for more information on [OSHA's Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements](#) page.

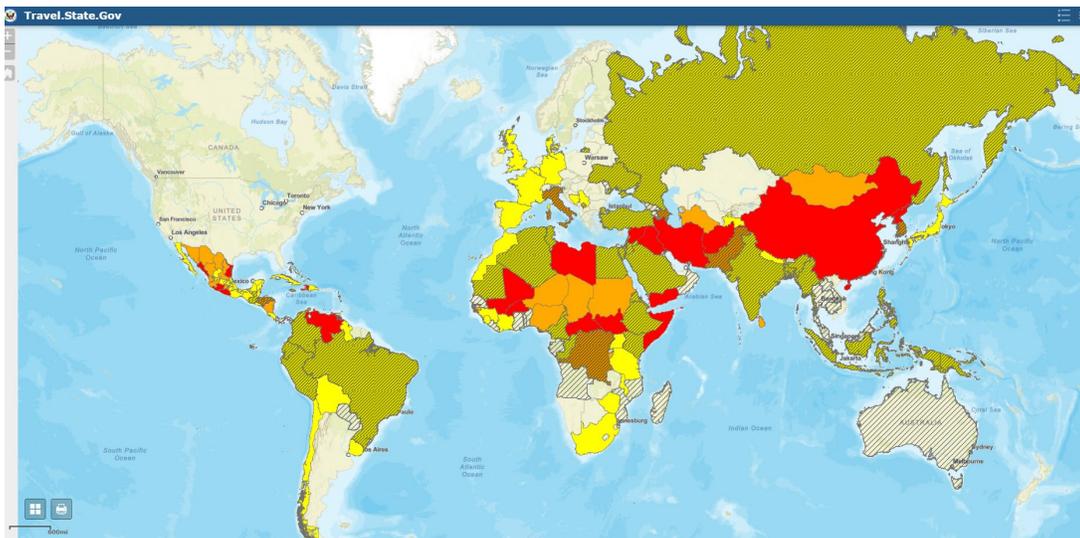
Q: How should I respond internally and externally?

- **Do:**
 - Educate yourself as well as your employees and customers on the steps you are taking to mitigate any exposure to COVID-19 – viruses affect everyone and don't discriminate. This may be a good time to remind employee's on company attendance, time off, and leave of absence policies, or you may want to communicate new policies you plan to implement due to the coronavirus.
 - Treat all of your employees equally with dignity every day – they want to know they are a valued and respected member of the team and that you are providing a safe work environment.
 - Review the [Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#) and your paid sick leave or paid-time-off (PTO) policy to determine how pay will be handled for exempt and non-exempt employees.
 - Understand that COVID-19 could be considered a serious health condition and unpaid, time-off may be protected under the [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#).
 - Think about how you will handle employee travel, both business and personal.
 - Know the procedures for dealing with live coronavirus cases and subsequent investigations as well as [quarantines](#).
 - Review the [data privacy implications](#) of employee telecommuting.
- **Don't:**
 - Let fear and anxiety about COVID-19 lead to social stigma – stigma is discrimination of an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation (ex. toward Chinese or Asian Americans or those who are quarantined). Stigma as well as medical information, taking body temperature, doctor's notes, etc. may be protected under the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
 - Make assumptions – coughing and sneezing alone can be simple allergies. These flare up during the spring.
 - Become overwhelmed with analysis paralysis – the tips from ODH, CDC and OSHA are a reasonable path to prevention.
 - Require people who are well to wear a face mask – the CDC doesn't recommend using them to protect against respiratory diseases – they should only be used if a healthcare professional recommends it.



Q: Is it still safe to travel internationally?

A: The U.S. Department of State is advising against travel to China and Iran due to COVID-19 outbreaks and advising that travelers reconsider plans to go to South Korea and Italy. Increased caution is advised in traveling to Japan (Level 2 advisory). Business travel to any restricted areas should be suspended until further notice from health officials. Failing to do so could result in substantial financial liabilities if an employee is denied reentry to the U.S. or exposed to the disease. Non-essential business trips should be limited as well. Trip insurance may be a good option to mitigate any trouble getting them home. If an employee elects to travel for personal reasons, you may validly require a quarantine period before allowing them to return to work. This should be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on where they travel. Click [here](#) to keep up to date on the number and locations of active cases. The map below depicts the U.S. Department of State's international travel recommendations. Click [here](#) to access the interactive map.



Click here if you have overseas operations: [CDC's Overseas Checklist](#)

Click here for the [World Health Organization's Info on COVID-19](#) and travel.

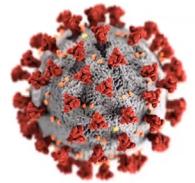
Q: What should I do if I had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

A: Detailed information for people who have had close contact with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19 are available from the Ohio Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [here](#). Your healthcare provider and local health department should be the first calls you make



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to help diagnose and take appropriate action. Here is an interactive map of Ohio with the location of your [local county health department](#).

Q: Should I get tested for COVID-19?

A: Call a health care professional if you develop a fever or symptoms of respiratory illness - such as cough or shortness of breath - within 14 days of travel from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, or Italy, or within 14 days of close contact with a COVID-19 patient. Testing is also advised for people who have severe, acute lower respiratory illness requiring hospitalization, and no other diagnosis to explain the symptoms.

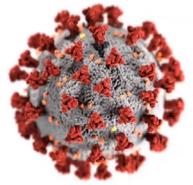
Q: Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

A: The CDC has not yet determined whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months, but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer.

Prepared by Tony Fiore, an attorney with Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter and the Director of Government Affairs for the Ohio SHRM State Council. Connect with Tony by e-mail: afiore@keglerbrown.com; LinkedIn: [acfiore](#); Twitter: [@TonyFioreEsq](#). Developed March 12, 2020, with information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of State; U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), World Health Organization (WHO).

Additional info can be found by clicking on the following links:

- **ODH** – www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or 1-800-427-5634 (1-833-4-ASK-ODH) [Top 10 Things You Can Do to Prepare for COVID-19](#) + [Checklist for Business/Employers](#)
- **CDC** – [Interim Guidance for Business and Employers](#)
- **SHRM** – [Keep Calm and Wash Your Hands](#) and [3 Ways to Keep Your Workplace Clean During Coronavirus Scare](#)
- **OSHA** – [OSHA Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements](#)
- **US Dept. of State** – [Interactive Travel Advisory Map](#)
- **USDOL** – [Coronavirus Resources](#)
- **EEOC** – [Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace](#)
- **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** - [Workplace Tips for Employees](#)
- **The Wall Street Journal** – [Coronavirus Poses Dilemma for Workers Who Risk Losing Pay](#)



SHRM Graphic

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS AT WORK



- **COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE WHEN YOU SNEEZE OR COUGH.**

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away; use your arm or sleeve to cover if you do not have a tissue.

- **CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN.**

Wash your hands with soap and water, vigorously rubbing together front and back for 20 seconds. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, rubbing hands until they are dry.



- **CLEAN SHARED SURFACES AND EQUIPMENT OFTEN.**

Use disinfectants to clean commonly touched items such as doorknobs, faucet handles, copy machines, coffee pot handles, desktops, handrails, microwave buttons, keyboards, and elevator buttons. Germs travel fast with multiple hands touching shared surfaces.



- **AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE OR MOUTH.**

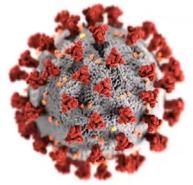
Germs need an entry point, and the average adult touches his or her face once every three or four minutes. Keep hand sanitizer at your desk to use after meetings or before grabbing one of those doughnuts from the breakroom.



- **STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK AND CHECK WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHEN NEEDED.**

When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.





CDC Graphics

Keeping the workplace safe Encourage your employees to...

Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

Be careful with meetings and travel



- Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible
- When not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces
- Consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings
- Assess the risks of business travel

Handle food carefully



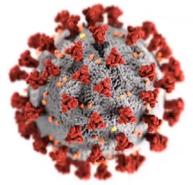
- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen health screening for cafeteria staff and their close contacts
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

Stay home if...



- They are feeling sick
- They have a sick family member in their home

What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus



Keeping commercial establishments safe

Encourage your employees and customers to...

Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door, and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Promote tap and pay to limit handling of cash
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

Avoid crowding



- Use booking and scheduling to stagger customer flow
- Use online transactions where possible
- Consider limiting attendance at larger gatherings

For transportation businesses, taxis, and ride shares



- Keep windows open when possible
- Increase ventilation
- Regularly disinfect surfaces

What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus