PROTECTING WORKERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Employers

- Like any hazard, **employers must ensure** they are assessing the potential exposures of their employees and developing safe work-practices to minimize exposure. This applies to any workplace where employees are working with other people in the workplace.

- **Assume everyone** you meet may be infected and contagious. Treat all encounters as a potential risk.

- Ensure employees who have to work closely to other employees and customers maintain a distance of **at least six feet**. Demarcate work areas to ensure adequate spacing for social distancing. For example, set up distance lines or mark floors with tape.

- **Promote regular handwashing** and the use of hand sanitizer. Everyone should wash his or her hands after touching any common surface, tools or piece of equipment.

- Implement **regular and frequent** sanitizing procedures that cover common-areas and shared tools and equipment. Don't forget to include forklifts, powered hand-tools, machines, writing utensils, keyboards, cash registers, telephones, doorknobs, ladders and railings.

- Employers should promote a regular practice of checking in with each employee daily and inquiring about their concerns, issues, and well-being. Employers may consider implementing wellness checks prior to each shift.*

- OSHA has developed a variety of resources for workers and employers on how to stay healthy during this pandemic.

- Please visit OSHA.gov/coronavirus for additional resources and information on implementing the hierarchy of controls when workers have specific exposure risks.

*Please see Appendix A for wellness check recommendations

Employees

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

- The best way to prevent illness is to **avoid being exposed** to this virus.

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.

  - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

  - COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds** especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

- **Assume everyone** you meet may be infected and contagious. Treat all encounters as a potential risk.

- Listen to and follow the directions of your **state and local authorities**.

- **If you feel sick**, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.

- **If your children are sick**, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.

- **If someone in your household has tested positive** for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.

Symptoms

These symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure** (based on the incubation period of MERS-CoV viruses). The most common symptoms are:

- Cough
- Fever (≥100.4 degrees F)
- Shortness of Breath
- Tiredness

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Appendix A: Wellness/Health Screening

In an effort to reduce employee and community spread, employers may consider implementing the following wellness and health screenings prior to each shift:

- Ask each employee if they have experienced any of the symptoms related to COVID-19 exposure in the past 24 hours (i.e. cough, fever, shortness of breath, etc.). If yes, employees should be sent home and instructed to contact their doctor.

- Ask each employee if they have been in contact with anyone that has been told they were presumptive positive or confirmed positive for COVID-19.

- If decided by the employer, each employee should have their temperature taken each day, and if they have a fever at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, those employees should be sent home. The employee should monitor their symptoms and call a doctor or use telemedicine if needed.

- These employees can return to work when:

  - They have had NO fever for at least three (3) days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; AND

  - There is improvement in their respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) for three (3) days; AND

  - At least seven (7) days have passed since their symptoms began.

- If any of your employees present with a fever and have recently traveled to an area with community spread of COVID-19, they are required to stay home for 14 days from the time they were exposed to COVID-19.

- If at any time a doctor confirms the cause of their fever or other symptoms is not COVID-19 and approves them to return to work, then employees can return.

- It is best to use touchless thermometers (infrared forehead/temporal artery thermometers) if possible, but if you must use oral or other types of thermometers, make sure to sanitize the thermometers thoroughly between each employee, as to not spread infection.

- Lastly, check in with employees regularly regarding their mental health and well-being. Consideration should not only be given toward physical symptoms, but to stress, anxiety and mental health as well.

Sources:

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