



BOSTON COLLEGE  
Center for Work & Family  
CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

## COVID-19 Updates and Resources

### [8 Questions Employers Should Ask About Coronavirus](#) (HBR)

- An elevated temperature combined with respiratory symptoms is the best indicator of possible COVID-19.
- Hand washing is one of the best defenses against infection. Employers should ensure that employees have access to washing facilities well-stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Public health organizations recommend that employers ban employees or visitors from coming to the office for 14 days after a medium or high risk exposure to the virus, which generally means they have come in close contact with someone infected or have traveled to a high risk region.
- Employers should review their paid time off and sick leave policies and ensure their employees that they will not be penalized and can afford to take sick leave, which can encourage self-reporting and reduce potential exposure.
- Ensure employers have reliable real-time communication with all employees, including those not on site, to provide updates on conditions and policies. This includes maintaining updated contact information and regularly testing organization-wide communication.
- Limit business travel to areas where COVID-19 is most prevalent, to prevent both illness and loss of productivity from quarantine or exclusion from the workplace after travel. The CDC [Travel Health Notices](#) and [State Department Travel Advisories](#) can be used to determine what travel should be cancelled or postponed.

### [Interim Guidance for Business and Employers](#) (CDC)

- To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, do not make determinations of risk for COVID-19 based on race or country of origin, and maintain confidentiality of any employees with confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- **Recommended strategies for employees to use now:**
  - Actively encourage sick employees to stay home if they have symptoms of acute respiratory illness or a fever (100.4 degrees F or higher)
  - Ensure sick leave policies are flexible, and do not require a note from a healthcare provider to validate an employee's illness, as offices will be busy and may not be able to provide timely documentation. Maintain flexible

policies that permit employees to stay home to take care of sick children or family members.

- Separate and send home employees who come to work appearing to have acute respiratory illness or who develop symptoms at work.
- Emphasize and educate employees on the importance of staying home when sick, coughing and sneezing etiquette, and hand hygiene.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol based hand rubs and ensure supplies are maintained.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning of all surfaces in the workplace. Provide disposable wipes for employees to wipe down common surfaces themselves before use.
- Advise employees to take necessary steps before traveling, including checking themselves for symptoms, checking recommendations for countries they are traveling to, and calling a healthcare provider if they become sick while traveling.
- Advise employees to tell their supervisor and conduct a risk assessment if they have a family member at home sick with COVID-19.
- **Considerations for creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan**
  - Employers must also consider how to lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the U.S.
  - Employers should identify and communicate their objectives in the event of an outbreak. This could include:
    - Reducing transmission among staff
    - Protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
    - Maintaining business operations
    - Minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chain
  - Key considerations when making decisions on appropriate response
    - Disease severity in the community where the business is located
    - Impact of disease on employees that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for health complications from COVID-19
    - Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in the family or dismissed schools
    - If employers have multiple locations, provide local managers with authority to make decisions based on conditions in their locations
    - Coordinate with state and local health officials to guide timely and appropriate responses
  - Recommendations for Response Plan
    - Identify possible workplace exposure and health risks

- Review HR policies to ensure they are consistent with public health recommendations and state and federal laws
- Explore whether the company can implement practices to increase physical distance between employees, such as telecommuting and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts) if authorities recommend social distancing
- Identify key functions and job roles within supply chains essential to business operations, and consider how they'll be affected by absenteeism.
- Set up procedures for activating the response plan and altering business operations
- Plan to minimize exposure between employees and between employees and the public if authorities call for social distancing
- Establish a process to communicate plans and updates to employees and business partners
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies for employees
- If there is evidence of an outbreak, consider cancelling non-essential business travel to additional countries, as well as large meetings or events

#### [How Working Parents Can Prepare for Coronavirus Closures](#) (HBR)

- Working parents should speak to their boss one-on-one about mutual expectations for possible scenarios related to COVID-19 -- for example, what will happen if their child's school closes but the workplace is still open.
- Working parents should also make sure they're on the same page as their parenting partner on how they will share responsibilities and accommodate possible changes in work schedules and school closures. Seek out solutions and back-up plans to handle possible scenarios.
- Learn to leverage technology wisely. Consider how family members will be able to work with the available computers and tablets to complete school work or work from home, and become familiar with online technology systems now. Understand limitations as well, as internet bandwidth may not support all family members working online or using the internet at the same time.
- Consider how friends can help support each other, whether that be taking turns grocery shopping or sharing ideas for creative activities to keep children entertained at home.
- Remember the bigger picture. Use this as an opportunity to teach children about what matters most and our responsibilities to each other.

### [SHRM Resources: Communicable Diseases](#)

SHRM has developed a variety of tools and resources related to COVID-19. Some are accessible to their members only, while some articles like [CDC Official Asks Employers to Do All They Can to Slow Coronavirus](#) are open access.

### **Corporate Examples:**

#### [COVID-19 Strategies and Policies of the World's Largest Companies](#)

Microsoft: [As we work to protect public health, we also need to protect the income of hourly workers who support our campus](#)

- Microsoft has asked employees in the Puget Sound region and northern California who can work from home to do so, which means they have a reduced need for hourly workers on-site. The company acknowledges the impact lost work will have on hourly workers, they have decided to continue paying all vendor hourly service workers their regular pay during this period, whether their services are needed or not.
- Microsoft recognizes that this action may not be possible for smaller companies, but believes that larger employers who are able to should consider taking these steps as well.

#### [Tech giants promise to pay hourly workers as employees commute](#)

- Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Amazon recently announced that they plan to pay hourly workers regular wages even as on-site support staffing needs are reduced while employees work from home.

#### [Walmart- New COVID-19 Policy to Support the Health of Our Associates](#)

- Should an associate be quarantined or have a confirmed case of the virus, they'll receive up to two weeks of pay. If they're not able to return to work after that time, additional pay replacement may be provided for up to 26 weeks for both full-time and part-time hourly associates.

### **Additional Resources:**

[CDC Travel Health Notices](#)

[State Department Travel Advisories](#)

[COVID-19: Implications for business](#) (McKinsey)

[The impact of Coronavirus on the global market](#) (Mercer)

[Responding to the potential business impacts of COVID-19](#) (PwC)