



COVID-2019: Ways to Plan, Prepare & Respond

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Legal Responsibilities

- Regularly consult the CDC for the most current information
- Be mindful of OSHA's General Duty Clause
- Ensure policies comply with federal, state and local laws especially leaves and accommodations
- Remember employee's privacy concerns when communicating personal health information



Families First COVID-2019 Response Act

House of Representatives passed HR 6201 (3/14/20)

Lawmakers have yet to vote

The bill includes:

- Two weeks of paid sick leave
- Up to three months (12 weeks) of paid family and medical leave

Note: Currently medical leave provisions allow for 12 weeks of job protection **with no additional pay**. The new bill would provide those taking paid medical leave from a company with fewer than 500 employees with two-thirds of their typical pay for the 12-week period. This leave measure would be available for one year to assist people affected by the coronavirus.

Workplace Strategies

- Don't Panic
- Educate employees “facts not myths”
- Require employees to update their emergency contact form
- Encourage employees to work from home to the extent possible
- Promote social distancing in workplaces
- Stagger work schedules
- Utilize state unemployment benefits

Prioritize Communications

Designate one person to manage all employee communications

Keep employees informed about where to access updates

Communicate about:

- Facts not myths
- Measures being taken to protect employees
- Expectations if an employee is infected with COVID-2019
- Travel and internal policies upon return

School Closures & Quarantined Employees

During a public health emergency the following situations may be covered under federal, state or local sick leave laws.

- Employees needing to stay home with a child due to school closures
- When a health care provider instructs an employee or their family member to self-quarantine the employee can use sick leave even if no one is sick
- The exclusion of the employee from the workplace for health reasons

Be Clear About Travel

Develop a Temporary Travel Policy

Be clear about who the policy applies to

Cover travel restrictions for both international and domestic travel (US hot spots)

Identify what qualifies as essential and non-essential travel

Inform employees how this impacts personal travel

- Requiring notification before travel to US hot spots
- Communicate to employee they may be subject to a waiting period which may be without pay
- Require notification after travel before returning to work

Ask Employees to Stay Home

- Employers can ask an employee returning from an affected area to stay home
- Employers may also send an employee home who appears to have symptoms of a contagious illness
- The incubation period for the COVID-2019 is typically 14 days however they may be contagious for longer
- Be sure a factual basis exists for your decision to exclude someone from the workplace





Quarantine (Waiting Period) Considerations

What are the circumstances?

- Return from certain travel (this is ever changing)
- Potential exposure (direct contact)
- Diagnosis

General Considerations

- How long will it be
- Whether it will be paid
- Remote work, if permitted
- American with Disabilities Act
- Additional cost to employee
- Conditions for return to work

Quarantine (Waiting Period) Considerations

What if employee (or family member) becomes sick during the Quarantine (Waiting Period)?

- FMLA and / or state leave laws may apply
- Sick days (employer provided and / or state-mandated)
- Insurance (employer; or state provided benefits)
- Workers' compensation

Focus on Pay

- General rule: There is no legal duty to pay during waiting period
- Identify required benefit payments

Help Employees Manage Unexpected Expenses

Shorten time between pay periods

- Direct Deposit
- Paycheck advances
- Loans

Unemployment benefits

- Workshare program
- Temporary Layoffs

Leverage Technology & a Remote Workforce

Create an infrastructure that supports

- Remote work and collaboration

Connect employees with others

- Communication & project management platforms
- Video-conferencing
- Chat apps

Provide training on managing remote teams

- Best practices for communicating
- Practicing emotional intelligence and empathy

Develop a Remote Work Policy

Communicate employer expectations in a clear and consistent manner to all remote workers

A workplace policy should address:

- The process for making remote working requests
- Equipment and supplies
- Safety concerns
- Wage and hour issues, particularly regarding nonexempt employees
- Duration of arrangements

Protecting Your Workforce



Under OSHA, the flu, COVID-2019, and common cold are considered known hazards

- Reduce exposure in community settings
- Restrict business travel
- Promote working remotely

Online Resources

HR4VR

www.HR4VR.com

CDC Coronavirus (COVID-2019)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

OSHA guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-2019

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osha/osha20200309>

U.S. Department of Labor

<https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>

FLSA Q&A

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa/pandemic>

Unemployment Benefits Finder (by State)

<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/find-unemployment-benefits.aspx>

Questions? Contact us!



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