

## EMPLOYERS/BUSINESSES

The Ohio Department of Health asks employers and businesses to be prepared to protect employees in the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease. Please stay calm, seek out accurate information to share with employees, and be kind, staying mindful of actions that could perpetuate any discrimination or stigma associated with COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.

The below guidance was adapted March 3, 2020, from recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more detailed guidance and any updates, please visit the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov).

*For additional information, also visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).*

- Encourage employees with symptoms of acute respiratory illness to stay home.
- Develop non-punitive, flexible sick leave policies consistent with public health guidance. Allow employees to remain home for their own or a family member's illness or to care for a child if schools should temporarily close.
- Separate employees who have acute respiratory illness symptoms at work from others and send them home immediately.
- Ask employees who have a family member at home with COVID-19 to notify a supervisor. Refer to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, inform other employees of their possible exposure in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Refer to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure.
- Inform employees that some people may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Emphasize respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees at all times:
  - Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other areas where they are likely to be seen.
  - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles employee use.
  - Maintain adequate supplies of soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace.
  - Place hand rubs in multiple locations and/or in conference rooms.
- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use cleaning agents that are usually used and follow directions on the label.

- Provide disposable wipes so employees can clean commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) before each use.
- Advise employees before traveling to check the [CDC Travel Health Notices](#) and [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories](#) the to stay home if they are sick.
- Plan for the cancelling of non-essential travel.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism or critical supply chains are interrupted.
- Consider cross-training personnel in essential roles.
- Prepare to consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events.
- Try to establish policies and practices -- such as telecommuting, web-based conferences, and flexible work hours/staggered shifts – to distance employees from others if necessary.
- Establish a process to communicate information to employees and business partners. Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation and respond with credible information.
- To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the [CDC guidance](#) to determine risk of COVID-19. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19.