

Coronavirus (COVID-19) HR Do's and Don'ts

Dear clients, vendors, partners, affiliates and friends of the firm,

The World Health Organization (WHO) has just raised the concern level of COVID-19 by labeling it a [Pandemic](#). As you look at next steps for your organization, think about how you can support your employees. The first step in that process has got to be understanding what your HR policies are and how/if you need to modify them.

As you go through the process, here are some mistakes you “DON'T” want to make, and some guidelines you “DO” want to follow to protect you and your employees.

- **DON'T** make decisions without understanding your HR policies and any last-minute guidelines or mandates provided by national, state or local authorities.
- **DON'T** ignore concerns from people, real or imagined, over this situation. Give everyone your time and attention, and make sure to address those concerns.
- **DON'T** discriminate by affording employees different levels of support on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, or any other protected factor.
- **DON'T** wait for your facility, or facilities, to be in a quarantined zone before acting to safeguard your employees, and consequently their loved ones.

Here's what to do instead:

- **DO** go, if possible, above and beyond your policies to support your employees. They are the engine of your organization and this situation is not being caused by them.
- **DO** study the [guidelines](#) provided by the Centers for Disease Control regarding symptoms and how to prevent the illness.
- **DO** provide time under FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) to care for an immediate family member (i.e., spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition.
- **DO** make accommodations for older adults, or people with chronic conditions that may put them at a higher risk of complications from COVID-19.
- **DO** get as many employees as possible to start working remotely. This will decrease the risk of transmission substantially.

While employers shouldn't panic over the onset of COVID-19, let's make sure we don't confuse panic with readiness, because right now complacency is probably our worst enemy.

Best,



Robert Newland
CEO

Attached: Guidelines from the CDC

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

