



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Businesses and Employers March 24, 2020

The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) encourages businesses and employers to prepare now for impacts to your facilities and employees. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) are credible sources of updated guidance. If you have a question specific to your facility, please contact your local health department.

Collective Goals: To decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in the workplace, by 1) reducing transmission among employees, 2) maintaining healthy business operations, and 3) maintaining a healthy work environment.

Q. What do I do if someone in my facility was exposed to the virus and comes to work? Or, decides to self-quarantine? How does a company manage the exposure to those in the surrounding area to the person affected?

A. IDPH resources and fact sheets provide detailed guidance:

1. What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/COVID%20exposed%20_1.420200317.pdf
2. What to do if you have symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/COVID-19_Concerned_Testing.pdf
3. What to do if you have confirmed or suspected coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/COVID%20case%20positive_1.4.pdf

Q. What steps can I take now for my business?

A. CDC Guidance:

1. **Strategies and Resources for Businesses and Employers: Plan, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19**
 - **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene** by all employees and ensure that adequate supplies of tissues, soap, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer (> 60% alcohol) are available and easily accessible. Post reminders in bathrooms and kitchenettes regarding hand washing (www.dupagehealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/2360/Hand-Hygiene-Poster-for-Healthcare-Settings-PDF and www.dupagehealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/2359/Hand-Hygiene-Poster-for-Public-Settings-English-and-Spanish-PDF).
 - Actively encourage sick employees to stay home, except for medical care.
 - Separate sick employees: CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be **separated from other employees and be sent home immediately**. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or the inside of their elbow if no tissue is available).
 - Ensure that your sick leave policies are **flexible, non-punitive**, and consistent with public health guidance, and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
 - **Do not require a healthcare provider's note** for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

(continued)



- **Promote social/physical distancing** by avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) between employees (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias) or between employees and customers when possible. Stagger shifts and breaks as possible and promote telework or work from home where appropriate.
- Advise employees **before traveling** to check CDC Travel Health Notices, monitor symptoms.
- **Identify essential business functions, jobs, and critical elements** within your supply chains required to maintain **continuity of business operations**. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted. **Cross-train staff** so operations may continue.
- Establish a process to communicate information to employees and business partners on your infectious disease outbreak response plans.
- CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

2. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

- Perform **routine environmental cleaning**
 - Routinely clean and disinfect all shared spaces, common areas, and especially frequently touched surfaces in the workplace.
 - Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- This CDC link (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) has guidance on:
 - *Cleaning and Disinfection After Persons Suspected/Confirmed to Have COVID-19 Have Been in the Facility*
 - *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hand Hygiene*
 - *Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims*

Q. Who should I call about testing in Illinois?

A. Don't call the health department about getting testing. Your healthcare provider will determine if you should be tested and, if necessary, contact the health department.

IDPH fact sheet: www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/COVID-19_WhoToCall.pdf

Q. How long is the virus active in a variety of circumstances: airborne, touch, plastic/steel/wood/cardboard surfaces? How do we treat deliveries from suppliers? Some may come from overseas-do the deliveries need to be quarantined, kept in a separate area and not opened for a specific length of time?

A. "The scientists found that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was detectable in aerosols for [at least] three hours, up to four hours on copper, **up to 24 hours on cardboard** and up to **two to three days on plastic and stainless steel.**" "...on average, researchers say this family of viruses can survive between four and five days on various materials like aluminium, wood, paper, plastic and glass."

- **Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1**
www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMc2004973?articleTools=true
- **New coronavirus stable for hours on surfaces, SARS-CoV-2 stability similar to original SARS virus.**
www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces
- **New Study Indicates How Long Coronaviruses Can Survive on a Surface**
www.sciencealert.com/study-shows-just-how-long-coronaviruses-can-stick-around-on-a-surface

Q. Am I at risk for COVID-19 from a package or products shipping from China?

A. While we don't know for sure that this virus will behave the same way as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, we can use the information gained from both of these earlier coronaviruses to guide us. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods. Information will be provided on the [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) website](http://Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website) as it becomes available.

IDPH Translated Resources on Prevention: www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/translated-resources