

Self-Checker



TM

Coronavirus Self-Checker

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC twenty four seven. Saving Lives, Protecting People](#)



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

[Centers for Disease Control and](#)



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

[Prevention. CDC twenty four seven. Saving Lives, Protecting People](#)

Search Search Icon Close Icon

Search

Coronavirus

[Coronavirus All CDC](#)

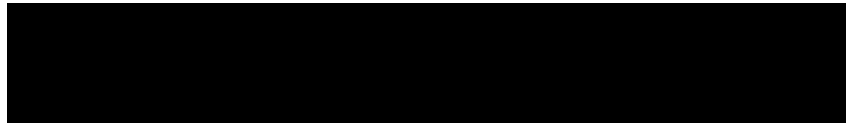
For a full list of topics: [All A-Z Topics](#)
[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[CDC Home](#)

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Syndicate](#)

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019



Related Pages

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

[Find more information here.](#)

Summary of Changes to the Guidance:

Below are changes as of March 21, 2020

- Updated cleaning and disinfection guidance
- Updated best practices for conducting social distancing
- Updated strategies and recommendations that can be implemented now to respond to COVID-19

CDC Industry Guidance

- [Resources for Airlines](#)
- [Resources for the Ship Industry](#)

OSHA/HHS Guidance

- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19pdf iconexternal icon](#)

Purpose

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about the coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but the virus continues to spread internationally and in [the United States](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this interim guidance as additional information becomes available.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. (CDC has provided separate guidance for [healthcare settings](#).) This guidance also provides planning considerations for community spread of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19 infection. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed coronavirus infection. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on [CDC's web page](#).

Preparing Workplaces for a COVID-19 Outbreak

Businesses and employers can prevent and [slow the spread of COVID-19](#). Employers should plan to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of disease transmission in the community and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most American workers will likely experience low (caution) or medium exposure risk levels at their job or place of employment (see [OSHA guidance for employerspdf iconexternal icon](#) for more information about job risk classifications).

Businesses are strongly encouraged to coordinate with [stateexternal icon](#) and [localexternal icon](#) health officials so timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses. Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies. CDC has [guidance for mitigation strategiespdf icon](#) according to the level of community transmission or impact of COVID-19.

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in their workplace. This may include activities in one or more of the following areas:

1. reduce transmission among employees,

2. maintain healthy business operations, and
3. maintain a healthy work environment.

Reduce Transmission Among Employees

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#).

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work:

- See [OSHA COVID-19external icon](#) webpage for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and [guidance for employerspdf iconexternal icon](#), including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at [higher risk for serious illness](#), such as [older adults](#) and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.

Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

Educate employees about how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Employees can [take steps to protect themselves](#) at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at [higher risk for complications](#).
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. Learn what to do [if someone in your house is sick](#).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing](#) etiquette on the CDC website.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#)[external icon](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.

Maintain Healthy Business Operations

Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.
- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive "emergency sick leave" policies.
- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the [Department of Labor's](#)[external icon](#) and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's](#)[external icon](#) websites).
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the death of a loved one.

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.

- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from [childcare programs and K-12 schools](#).

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Consider establishing policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing should be implemented if recommended by state and local health authorities. Social distancing means avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework)
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)
- Downsizing operations
- Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
- Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery

Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their COVID-19 response plan based on local conditions.

Maintain a healthy work environment

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase ventilation rates.
- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.

- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [herepdf iconexternal icon](#). Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- 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.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2external icon](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility:

- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Advise employees before traveling to take additional preparations:

- Check the [CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from countries with travel advisories, and information for aircrew, can be found on the [CDC website](#).
- Advise employees to [check themselves for symptoms](#) of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

Take care when attending [meetings and gatherings](#):

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary.

- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

Resources for more information:

CDC Guidance

- [COVID-19 Website](#)
- [What You Need to Know About COVID-19pdf icon](#)
- [What to Do If You Are Sick With COVID-19pdf icon](#)
- [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings](#)
- [Health Alert Network](#)
- [Travelers' Health Website](#)
- [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health'spdf icon](#)
- [Small Business International Travel Resource Travel Plannerpdf icon](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Ships](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Airlines and Airline crew](#)
- [Persons at Higher Risk of Severe Illness](#)

Other Federal Agencies and Partners

- [OSHA COVID-19 Websiteexternal icon](#)
- [OSHA Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19pdf iconexternal icon](#)

Page last reviewed: March 22, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), [Division of Viral Diseases](#)

[home](#)[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

- [Symptoms & Testingplus icon](#)
 - [Symptoms](#)
 - [Should You Get Tested](#)
- [Prevent Getting Sickplus icon](#)
 - [How It Spreads](#)
 - [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Cleaning Your Homeplus icon](#)
 - [Detailed Disinfection Guidance](#)
- [Daily Life & Copingplus icon](#)
 - [Household Checklistplus icon](#)
 - [Detailed Planning Guidance](#)
 - [Stress & Copingplus icon](#)
 - [Reducing Stigma](#)
 - [Stop the Spread of Rumors](#)
 - [Caring for Childrenplus icon](#)
 - [Talking to Children](#)
 - [If You Have Animals](#)
- [If You Are Sickplus icon](#)

- [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Caring for Yourself at Home](#)
 - [Caring for Someone](#)
- [People Who Need Extra Precautions](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [People Who Are At Higher Risk](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [What You Can Do](#)
 - [Older Adults](#)
 - [People with Asthma](#)
 - [People with HIV](#)
 - [Others At Risk](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Homelessness](#)
 - [Pregnancy & Breastfeeding](#)
 - [Steps to Prevent Getting Sick](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Travel](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Travelers Returning from International Travel](#)
 - [Returning Cruise Ship Travelers](#)
 - [Travel in the US](#)
 - [Travel Health Notices](#)
 - [Travelers Prohibited from Entry to the US](#)
 - [FAQ for Travelers](#)
 - [Communication Resources for Travelers](#)
- [Cases & Latest Updates](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Cases in the US](#)
 - [Testing in the US](#)
 - [World Map](#)
 - [Situation Summary](#)
 - [CDC in Action](#)
- [Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
 - [Schools & Child Care](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Guidance for School & Child Care](#)
 - [FAQs for Administrators](#)
 - [Checklist for Teachers and Parents](#)
 - [Open Child Care Programs](#)
 - [Talking to Children](#)
 - [Colleges & Universities](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education](#)
 - [Guidance for Student Foreign Travel for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
 - [FAQs for Administrators](#)
 - [Businesses](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
 - [Gatherings & Community Events](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Event Planners](#)
 - [Election Polling Locations](#)
 - [FAQs for Event](#)
 - [First Responders and Law Enforcement](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Information for Law Enforcement Personnel](#)
 - [Community- and Faith-Based Organizations](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Community and Faith Leaders](#)
 - [Checklist to Get Your Organization Ready](#)
 - [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
 - [Homeless Population](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Screening for Symptoms at Entry](#)

- [Interim guidance for homeless service providers](#)
- [Retirement Communities](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Guidance for Retirement Communities](#)
 - [Checklist to Stay Healthy](#)
 - [FAQs for Administrators](#)
- [Correctional and Detention Facilities](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Guidance for Correctional & Detention Facilities](#)
 - [FAQs for Administrators, Staff, Incarcerated People & Family Members](#)
- [Public Health Communicators](#)
- [Healthcare Professionals](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Evaluating and Testing PUI](#)
 - [Postmortem Guidance](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for EMS](#)
 - [Infection Control](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#)
 - [Blood and Plasma Facilities](#)
 - [Dental Settings](#)
 - [FAQ on Infection Control](#)
 - [HCP Hand Sanitizer](#)
 - [FAQ on Hand Hygiene](#)
 - [Clinical Care](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Therapeutic Options for Patients with COVID-19](#)
 - [Pediatric Healthcare Providers](#)
 - [Disposition of Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19](#)
 - [Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Guidance](#)
 - [Underlying Conditions](#)
 - [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know](#)
 - [Strategies to Optimize PPE & Equipment](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Eye Protection](#)
 - [Isolation Gowns](#)
 - [Facemasks](#)
 - [N95 Respirators](#)
 - [Decontamination & Reuse of Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#)
 - [PPE Burn Rate Calculator](#)
 - [Ventilators](#)
 - [Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19](#)
 - [Preparedness Resources](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Healthcare Providers Preparedness Checklist](#)
 - [Hospital Preparedness Checklist](#)
 - [Implementing Home Care](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Preventing COVID-19 from spreading](#)
 - [Disposition of Non-Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19](#)
 - [Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [FAQ About Personal Protective Equipment](#)
 - [Release of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#)
 - [FAQ for Healthcare Professionals](#)
 - [Guidance for Non-US Settings](#)
- [Healthcare Facilities](#)[plus icon](#)
 - [Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities](#)
 - [Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes](#)
 - [Get Your Clinic Ready](#)
 - [Alternate Care Settings](#)
 - [Dialysis Facilities](#)[plus icon](#)

- [Screening at Intake](#)
 - [Return-to-Work Criteria for Healthcare Workers](#)
 - [Prepare to Care for COVID-19](#)
- [Health Departmentsplus icon](#)
 - [Evaluating PUIs Residential](#)
 - [Reporting a PUI or Confirmed Case](#)
 - [Travel-Associated Exposures](#)
 - [Community-Related Exposures](#)
 - [Pandemic Preparedness Resources](#)
 - [Households with Pets](#)
 - [COVID-19 Publications](#)
 - [Water Transmission and COVID-19](#)
- [Laboratoriesplus icon](#)
 - [FAQs for Laboratories](#)
 - [CDC Lab Workplus icon](#)
 - [Testing](#)
 - [CDC Grows SARS-CoV-2](#)
 - [Guidelines for Clinical Specimens](#)
 - [Lab Biosafety Guidelines](#)
 - [Requests for Diagnostic Tools and Virus](#)
 - [Research Use Only Real-Time RT-PCR Primer and Probe Information](#)
- [Communication Resourcesplus icon](#)
 - [Guidance Documents](#)
 - [Buttons and Badges](#)
 - [Print Resources](#)
 - [Videos](#)
 - [What's New](#)

email_03Get Email Updates

To receive email updates about COVID-19, enter your email address:

Email Address

[What's this?](#)

HAVE QUESTIONS?

[Visit CDC-INFO](#)

Call 800-232-4636

[Email CDC-INFO](#)

[Open 24/7](#)

CDC INFORMATION

- [About CDC](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [File Viewers & Players](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [FOIA](#)
- [No Fear Act](#)
- [OIG](#)
- [Nondiscrimination](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

CONNECT WITH CDC

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Instagram](#)

- [Syndicate](#)
- [CDC TV](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [Email](#)

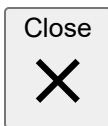
[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

[USA.gov](#)

[CDC Website Exit Disclaimer](#) external icon

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Email](#)

Exit Notification/Disclaimer Policy



**Links with this icon
website.**

indicate that you are leaving the CDC

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cannot attest to the accuracy of a non-federal website.
- Linking to a non-federal website does not constitute an endorsement by CDC or any of its employees of the sponsors or the information and products presented on the website.
- You will be subject to the destination website's privacy policy when you follow the link.
- CDC is not responsible for Section 508 compliance (accessibility) on other federal or private website.

For more information on CDC's web notification policies, see [Website Disclaimers](#).