OSHA Guidance for Employers Overview

**DEVELOP INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PLAN**

Develop an infectious disease preparedness and response plan that can help guide protective actions against COVID-19. Stay abreast of guidance from federal, state, local, tribal, and/or territorial health agencies and consider how to incorporate those recommendations and resources into workplace-specific plans. Plans should consider and address the level(s) of risk associated with various worksites and job tasks workers perform at those sites. Such considerations may include the following:

- Where, how, and to what sources of SARS-CoV-2 workers may be exposed
- Nonoccupational risk factors at home and in community settings
- Controls necessary to address those risks

Follow federal and state, local, tribal, and/or territorial (SLTT) recommendations regarding development of contingency plans for situations that may arise because of outbreaks.

**PREPARE TO IMPLEMENT BASIC INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES**

For most employers, protecting workers depends on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. As appropriate, all employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices, including the following:

Develop Policies & Procedures for Prompt Identification & Isolation of Sick People, if Appropriate

- Develop, Implement and Communicate Workplace Flexibilities & Protections
- Implement Workplace Controls
DEVELOP POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR PROMPT IDENTIFICATION & ISOLATION OF SICK PEOPLE

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infected individuals is a critical step in protecting workers, customers, visitors, and others at a worksite.

Employers should inform and encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure. Employers should develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

When appropriate, employers should develop policies and procedures for immediately isolating people who have signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 and train workers to implement them. Move potentially infected people to a location away from workers, customers, and other visitors.

Take steps to limit spread of the respiratory secretions from a person who may have COVID-19.

If possible, isolate people suspected of having COVID-19 from those with confirmed infection to prevent further transmission.

Restrict the number of personnel entering isolation areas.

Protect workers in close contact with (ie, within 6 feet) a sick person or who have prolonged/repeated contact with such persons by using additional engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE.
Develop, Implement & Communicate Workplace Flexibility & Protections

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.

Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

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 nonpunitive leave 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 and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.

Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

Recognize that workers with ill family members may need to stay home to care for them. Be aware of workers' concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues that may arise during infectious disease outbreaks. Provide adequate, usable, and appropriate training, education, and informational material about business-essential job functions and worker health and safety, including proper hygiene practices and the use of any workplace controls (including PPE).

Work with insurance companies (e.g., those providing employee health benefits) and state and local health agencies to provide information to workers and customers about medical care in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.
IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKPLACE CONTROLS

During a COVID-19 outbreak, when it may not be possible to eliminate the hazard, the most effective protection measures are (listed from most effective to least effective) engineering controls, administrative controls, safe work practices (a type of administrative control), and PPE.

Engineering controls:
Engineering controls involve isolating employees from work-related hazards. In workplaces where they are appropriate, these types of controls reduce exposure to hazards without relying on worker behavior and can be the most cost-effective solution to implement. Engineering controls for SARS-CoV-2 include the following:

- **Administrative controls**
  Administrative controls require action by the worker or employer. Typically, administrative controls are changes in work policy or procedures to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard. Examples of administrative controls for SARS-CoV-2 include the following:

- **Safe work practices**
  Safe work practices are types of administrative controls that include procedures for safe and proper work used to reduce the duration, frequency, or intensity of exposure to a hazard. Examples of safe work practices for SARS-CoV-2 include the following:

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**
  While engineering and administrative controls are considered more effective in minimizing exposure to SARS-CoV-2, PPE may also be needed to prevent certain exposures. While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other prevention strategies.
REQUIREMENTS FOR PPE

Employers are obligated to provide their workers with PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their jobs. The types of PPE required during a COVID-19 outbreak is based on the risk of being infected with SARS-CoV-2 while working and job tasks that may lead to exposure.

Workers, including those who work within 6 feet of patients known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 and those performing aerosol-generating procedures, need to use respirators.

Respirator Considerations are as follows:

- Selected based on the hazard to the worker
- Properly fitted and periodically refitted, as applicable (eg, respirators)
- Consistently and properly worn, when required
- Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary
- Properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved, N95 filtering facepiece respirators or better must be used in the context of a comprehensive, written respiratory protection program that includes fit-testing, training, and medical examinations.
- When disposable N95 filtering facepiece respirators are unavailable, consider using other respirators that provide greater protection and improve worker comfort. Other types of acceptable respirators include a R/P95, N/R/P99, or N/R/P100 filtering facepiece respirator; an air-purifying elastomeric (eg, half-face or full-face) respirator with appropriate filters or cartridges; powered air purifying respirator (PAPR) with high-efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA) filter; or supplied air respirator (SAR).
Respirator Considerations Continued:

- Consider using PAPRs or SARs, which are more protective than filtering facepiece respirators, for any work operations or procedures likely to generate aerosols (e.g., cough-induction procedures, some dental procedures, invasive specimen collection, blowing out pipettes, shaking or vortexing tubes, filling a syringe, centrifugation).

- Use a surgical N95 respirator when both respiratory protection and resistance to blood and body fluids is needed.

- Face shields may also be worn on top of a respirator to prevent bulk contamination of the respirator. Certain respirator designs with forward protrusions (duckbill style) may be difficult to properly wear under a face shield. Ensure that the face shield does not prevent airflow through the respirator.

- Consider factors such as function, fit, ability to decontaminate, disposal, and cost.

- Respirator training should address selection, use (including donning and doffing), proper disposal or disinfection, inspection for damage, maintenance, and the limitations of respiratory protection equipment.