SAFER
Safe Actions For Employee Returns

Medical Health Considerations Return-to-Work Guidance

Protecting the health of workers before and after returning to the workplace

Prioritizing the physical health of workers as they return to the workplace is key to protecting their physical safety. Employers should develop procedures for monitoring and promoting the medical health of the workforce, ensuring appropriate physical distancing, and encouraging overall good hygiene and infection control practices. For additional information, visit the World Health Organization website at **https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019**

What is covered in this document:

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Screening and Testing

For employees to return to a workplace, many organizations may institute screening procedures to clear employees, customers, and/or visitors for entry into a building or site. COVID-19 testing and screening is the best way to manage access effectively and safely, but rapid, widespread testing is not currently available. In the near term, temperature screening and self-assessments are the best options for assessing risk based on some of the most common symptoms of COVID-19. Although these screening methods are not foolproof measures to detect COVID-19, organizations should consider the following actions:

- ☐ Provide written communication and/or webinars to inform employees how, when and where screenings will be conducted and what will happen should an employee have an elevated temperature or provide an unwanted answer on a screening questionnaire

- ☐ Engage safety committees in assisting with creating guidelines that follow CDC recommendations (e.g., fever threshold of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, self-isolation of suspected or confirmed cases)

- ☐ Ensure mechanisms are in place to track and understand completion and engagement metrics around screening communications and training

- ☐ Create guidelines for supervisors and managers in the event of a suspected case and ensure the employee has transportation and a place in which to shelter/self-isolate

- ☐ Establish a process, including talking points, for communicating to employees who have been in contact with a symptomatic employee (e.g., what steps occur as a result, self-quarantine, area closed for deep cleaning, etc.) and create a list of common FAQs to help anticipate the answers

- ☐ Communicate exposure information and screening results with third-party employers, such as staffing companies providing temporary workers, in a timely manner

- ☐ Refer to **guidance** to conduct needed public-health oriented measures (e.g., temperature checks) while also following Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations for health data/information

- ☐ Develop self-screening procedures for a dispersed workforce that reports to job sites, but not a company central location, and a process to effectively manage the self-screening procedures

- ☐ Consider incorporating questions about symptoms along with temperature checks, and consider utilizing smartphone apps for employees to answer these questions prior to coming to work

- ☐ Implement signage and other hazard controls in entrance screening cueing areas (ensure that cue is protected from adjacent vehicle traffic)

- ☐ For employers who have visitors or customers, clearly define protocols for who will be screened and how. Define how employees will be protected if there are visitors and customers who will not be screened.

Tracking and Tracing

In the event that an employee registers a fever, tests positive for COVID-19, provides an unwanted answer on a self-assessment and/or exhibits symptoms related to COVID-19, employers need to be ready to respond and should consider the following actions to address medical concerns:

☐ Develop, communicate and train employees on entrance screening protocol including temperature checks and response protocol for suspected cases while following EEOC guidelines for HIPAA compliance

☐ Maximize use of technology that enables reliable temperature measurement and monitoring with minimal operator intervention or that work as a standalone hands-free self-service system

☐ Identify screeners and protocol for screener safety (e.g., appropriate PPE) and tracking of temperature checks or health assessments that identify best practices for efficient use of PPE.

☐ Develop COVID-19 medical reporting protocols for workers that develop symptoms

☐ Set up an isolation room and associated protocols including required equipment and procedures for entering/exiting and transportation guidelines

☐ Dispense PPE to symptomatic workers and direct them to isolate

☐ Document and track suspected positive cases for contact tracing and arrange transportation home for workers denied entry

☐ Develop protocol for reporting positive test results to appropriate public health authorities as needed

☐ Provide CDC-recommended self-isolation guidelines for workers who do not pass screening protocol, check-in with them regularly and develop protocol for post-quarantine return to work

☐ Develop, communicate and train all employees on protocols in the event of a colleague exhibiting symptoms

☐ Establish disposal procedures and necessary equipment for PPE that will no longer be utilized (e.g., spent face coverings, gloves, respirators)

Hygiene and Infection Control

Employers should strongly encourage their employees to practice good hygiene and infection control. They should also provide ample opportunity for workers to engage in proper hygiene practices. Specifically, employers should consider the following actions to promote workplace hygiene:

☐ Encourage workers to stay home if they feel sick and if an onset of symptoms develop while at work, report it immediately (communicate any changes to sick time policies, like previous requirements for a physician's note when out more than a certain number of days)

☐ Encourage frequent hand washing and make hand sanitizer available in several locations, especially near common touchpoints

☐ Train and post signage about proper hand hygiene techniques in washrooms and break rooms

- ☐ Provide adequate amounts and locations of tissues, no-touch trash cans, anti-bacterial soap and alcohol-based hand antiseptics

- ☐ Consider installing hands-free arm-pull or foot-operated door openers in restrooms and for other heavily trafficked doors

- ☐ Encourage proper respiratory etiquette including covering coughs and sneezes with either a tissue or coughing into a sleeve (encourage wearing a face covering if deemed necessary and appropriate)

- ☐ Discourage the shared use of objects to the extent possible (e.g., phones, computers, office equipment and supplies, kitchen equipment and supplies) and when not possible, disinfect before/after use

- ☐ Provide training and information on proper disinfection techniques for shared spaces and objects (when unavoidable)

- ☐ Consider extending cleaning services (or develop a cleaning checklist) to include shared company vehicles, where applicable

- ☐ Consider strategically placing branded visual signage as a straightforward approach to remind people how to reduce their risk (i.e., with a focus on high-risk areas)

- ☐ Explain the difference between **cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing**

- ☐ Provide employees with disinfecting cleaning spray and cloth solutions to clean their own spaces such as desks, keyboards, phones, etc. on a regular basis

- ☐ Advise staff of how to treat items brought into the clean workplace (e.g., personal possessions, food items, laptops, PPE, etc.)