

COVID-19 Worksite Talking Points and Resources

DEVELOPED FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND TRIBAL HEALTH, UPDATED 6/4/2020

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Introduction

The following document is meant to be used by local public health and tribal health. It provides a compilation of talking points and resources related to worksite questions or technical assistance requests. **There may not be resources or guidance for all specific sectors or worksites, which will require application of principles from similar sectors. Note: This document is not meant for use with health and health care sectors or schools and daycares.** Content is accurate as of the date of publication.

Planning and Actions before a Positive COVID-19 Case in the Workplace

There are actions worksites can do to before they have a COVID-19 positive case to reduce the spread of disease. These actions should continue after an initial case.

COVID-19 Preparedness Planning

Talking Points

- Worksites should develop and communicate a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, which should include measures to minimize exposure to COVID-19, including changes to production, maintenance, human resources, employee training, and worker safety.
- Employers are strongly encouraged to involve employees in the development of the plan to increase buy-in and compliance.
- Aside from ensuring that sick employees are staying home, it's important for organizations to identify critical functions and develop plans for how to staff those functions even with increased numbers of employee absences.
- Some organizations may find it helpful to emphasize cross-training and develop backup plans for those "must-do" functions.
- If workers can work from home, it is strongly encouraged employers allow this and find ways to expand its use.
- Worksites are encouraged review and incorporate practices included in the general industry guidance for safely reopening ([Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#))

Guidance & Resources

[Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#) (DEED) General industry guidance for safely reopening. (The "Sector-Specific Resources" section at the end of this document also includes specific guidance for certain types of worksites)

- [Business Preparedness Plan Template, Instructions, Guidelines Checklist](#) (DLI)

- [Sector-specific Guidance for Preparedness Planning](#) (DLI) Includes for construction, convenience stores, public sector administration facilities, manufacturing, and more)
- [Advice to Help Employers Provide Safe, Healthful Workplaces](#) (OSHA) Publication 3990-03 2020, “Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19”
- [Prepare your Small Business and Employees for the Effects of COVID-19](#) (CDC) Includes steps to protect employees and prepare your business for disruption.
- Worksites that would like to request workplace safety or health assistance can contact MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation at 651-284-5060 or osha.consultation@state.mn.us.

Screen All Employees and Visitors

Talking Points

- All employees and visitors should be screened (Use of the [Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist](#) is recommended)
- Temperature screening can also be included in the initial screening; however, temperature screening alone is not effective. More than 25% of people with COVID-19 do not report fever or they report a low-grade fever.
- Effective employee screening is a two-step process, and employers should follow the guidance in “COVID-19 Employee Screening and Testing Recommendations for Industry”.
- Limit visitors to those essential to business operations and restrict where visitors can go within the facility.
- Identify and isolate workers with COVID-19 symptoms and send them home. Designate an area where access can be restricted for isolating workers who show symptoms of COVID-19 infection if they cannot immediately go home.

Guidance & Resources

- COVID-19 Employee Screening and Testing Recommendations for Industry (toolkit document)
- [Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist](#) (MDH). This includes the list of symptoms to check for all employees and visitors.
- [COVID-19 Enhanced Screening Form for Use in Manufacturing and Food Production Plants \(MDH template\)](#): This document can be used or adapted for enhanced screening of employees and visitors.
- [Methods Employers Can Use to Protect Employees during Screening](#) (CDC) Business FAQs “Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces” section.

Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces

Talking Points

- Implement distancing guidelines and operational changes that support/allow for workers' physical distancing of 6 feet required by CDC guidelines.
- Provide access to, assure training for use, and recommend all workers use the recommended protective supplies such as cotton face masks, gloves, disinfectant, guards, shields, etc.
- Evaluate traffic patterns to reduce crowding at entrances, in hallways, etc. Designate one-way entrances and exits in and out of the facility to support 6-foot physical distancing for workers.
- Maximize the use of telecommuting, virtual meetings, and other remote means of connecting with co-workers to reduce in person contact.
- Limit collective gatherings of workers to 10 people or less.
- Mark out 6-foot distances or circles for workers to stand in while they wait to punch in, to conduct health assessments, around desks, to perform handwashing, waiting for transportation, and in other areas where workers would normally congregate.
- Restrict or suspend business travel.
- Designate staff to monitor and instruct workers about compliance with distancing protocols and hygiene requirements.
- Stagger work-shift schedules, lunches, breaks, and start and end times to prevent congregating in changing rooms, entrance areas, transport areas, health screening areas, time clock areas.

Guidance & Resources

- [Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#) (DEED) Social distancing guidelines can be found on page 2.
- [Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces](#) (CDC). This website has commonly asked questions and answers and includes sector specific resources such as small businesses, grocery and food retail workers, waste and recycling collection workers, meat and poultry packing industry, and coping with stress for workers.
- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) (OSHA) This guidance is intended for planning purposes. Employers and workers should use this planning guidance to help identify risk levels in workplace settings and to determine any appropriate control measures to implement. Additional guidance may be needed as COVID-19 outbreak conditions change, including as new information about the virus, its transmission, and impacts, becomes available.
- [For Businesses: Safely Returning to Work](#) (DEED) Resources for employers when returning to work including frequently asked questions, additional resources for businesses, and A Guide for Minnesota Small Businesses Who Need Help.

- [MDH Materials](#) are available in multiple languages that support personal hygiene, social distancing, and more.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Talking Points

- Fully clean and disinfect work area equipment and common areas at least daily, and at every shift change.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectants to sanitize surfaces and follow label directions.
- Increase staffing for cleaning and disinfecting in order to increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection throughout the facility including break areas, lunchrooms and bathrooms.
- Pay special attention to high touch areas such as railings, tools, guards, doorknobs, computers, etc.
- If a worker becomes ill at work, the workplace must be cleaned and disinfected.

Guidance & Resources

- [Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#) (DEED) Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocols can be found on page 3.
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) (CDC)
- [Business FAQs “Cleaning and Disinfecting the Workplace](#) (CDC) Includes answers about cleaning and disinfecting equipment and resuming operations if a worker becomes ill.

Personal Hygiene

Talking Points

- Require and allow workers sufficient time to wash their hands frequently, including arrival and departure from the workplace, before and after using the restroom, before eating and drinking, and after touching surfaces that may be contaminated.
- Provide work areas with hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes.
- Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette. Post handwashing and “cover your cough” signs.
- Ensure workers regularly wash their hands. Ensure handwashing and/or hand-sanitizer facilities are readily available and stocked.
- Provide recommended protective supplies, such as non-medical cloth masks, gloves, disinfectant, guards, shields, etc.
- Prohibit on-site food preparation and sharing.

Guidance & Resources

- [Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#) (DEED) Worker hygiene and source controls can be found on page 2.
- [MDH Materials](#) are available in multiple languages that support personal hygiene, social distancing, and more.
- [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#) (CDC)
- [Coughing and Sneezing Etiquette](#) (CDC)
- [Protecting Yourself and Your Family](#) (MDH)

Communication with Employees

Talking Points

- Communicate with workers about actions being taken to prevent COVID-19 exposure through routine meetings, postings, including electronic postings, the company website, and start-of-day reminders.
- Check in with employees periodically to identify areas of concerns and potential solutions
- Institute a process for workers to report COVID-19 symptoms and other hazards in the workplace.
- Remind workers not to come to work if they are having symptoms of COVID-19 and fully inform and allow workers to use sick leave and other benefits if they are ill.
- Provide information in languages understood by workers and prominently post instructions and reminders about illness symptoms, handwashing and hygiene etiquette, and to report if they are feeling ill.

Guidance & Resources

- [Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist](#) (DEED) Communications and training practices and protocol can be found on page 4.
- [Worker Resource Guide](#) (DLI) Compilation of resources from across state agencies that are available to workers.
- [Safely Returning to Work](#) (DEED) Provides answers to FAQs workers may have about returning to work.
- [Worker Protections Related to COVID-19](#) (DLI)

Employment and Human Resources Items

Talking Points

- Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Do not require a health care provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as health care provider offices and medical facilities are extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Employers should 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.
- Clearly communicate sick leave policies to all workers. Communicate that workers will not face adverse consequences for staying home when they are sick.
- Provide accommodations for "high risk" and vulnerable populations such as telecommuting, different shifts, et al.
- Establish communication protocols when workers have been potentially exposed.
- Establish worker sickness reporting protocols.
- Clarify that discrimination against workers for any reason will not be tolerated and must be reported.
- Allow workers to work remotely if they are able to perform their work.

Guidance & Resources

- [Worker Resource Guide](#) (DLI) Compilation of resources from across state agencies that are available to workers.
- [Safely Returning to Work](#) (DEED) Provides answers to FAQs workers may have about returning to work.
- [Worker Protections Related to COVID-19](#) (DLI)

Actions after a Positive COVID-19 Case in the Workplace

Identifying Positive Cases

- Employees can be asked to share positive test results but cannot be required to do that.
- Health care, local public health, tribal health, or testing entities are legally not allowed to share information about individuals without signed consent forms from the person.
- Encouraging employees to report a positive case is aided by clear communication that people will not be punished, maintaining flexible sick policies, and other COVID-19 communication (see the [Communication with Employees](#) and [Human Resources Items](#) Sections)

Cluster of Cases at Worksite

Finalized talking points coming soon!

Co-workers of an Employee with COVID-19

Finalized talking points coming soon!

Returning to Work

Finalized talking points coming soon!

Sector Specific Resources

General Resources

- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020 \(CDC\)](#)
- [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#)
- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 \(OSHA\)](#)
- [For Businesses: Safely Returning to Work \(DEED\)](#)
- [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and When to Return to Work \(MDH\)](#)

Critical Infrastructure Sectors (power/energy, electrical, water, waste water)

- [COVID-19 Energy Sector Response Efforts and FAQs \(U.S. Department of Energy\)](#) Includes links to numerous energy sector resources (electric, gas, petroleum, drilling, natural gas)

Food-related worksites (food production, meat packing, retail food stores, restaurants/food pick-up & delivery)

- [Food Production / Agricultural Employers \(MDH\)](#)
- [Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers: Interim Guidance from CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)
- [Restaurants and Bars Employer Preparedness Plan Checklist \(DEED\)](#)
- [Bars, Restaurants, and Other Services Preparedness Plan template \(DLI\)](#)
- [Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(MDH\)](#)

- [Convenience Store Preparedness Plan Guidance](#) (DLI)
- [Grocery Stores-Protecting Workers Fact Sheet](#) (DLI)
- [Dairy Farms and Producers](#) (MDA)
- [Farmers' Markets and Vendors](#) and [Farmers' Market Signage](#) (MDA)
- [U-Pick Operations and On-Farm Markets](#) (MDA)
- [Nurseries and Garden Centers](#) and [Guidance for Employee Health and Safety](#) (MDA)

Manufacturing, general

- [Manufacturing Preparedness Plan Guidance](#) (DLI)
- [Manufacturing Workers and Employers](#) (CDC and OSHA) Interim guidance
- [Manufacturing Workers](#) (DLI) Guidance to protect workers.

Other Businesses

- [Personal Care Services/Salons Preparedness Plan Checklist](#) (DEED)
- [Retail/Customer Facing Businesses](#) (MN Retailers Association, DEED)
- [Places of Worship Preparedness Plan Checklist](#) (DEED) Includes guidance for faith-based communities, places of worship, weddings, and funerals.
- [Sales Auctions](#) and [Employer/Employee Health Recommendations for Sales Auctions](#) (MDA)
- [Airlines and Airline Crew: Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) (CDC) Updated interim guidance
- [Outdoor Recreation](#) (DNR) Includes guidance for safely opening outdoor recreation, camping, and boats and launches. [Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreational Facilities](#) (CDC)
- [Golf Courses](#) (DLI) Protecting workers and customers guidance
- [Bait shops](#) (DLI) Protecting workers and customers guidance
- [Public Sector Administration Facilities Preparedness Plan Guidance](#) (DLI)
- Construction (DLI)
 - [Personal protective equipment and face coverings](#)
 - [Planning, communication and training](#)
 - [Sanitation and hygiene](#)
 - [Social separation, distancing](#)
 - [Wellness and exposure-incident management](#)