

BACKGROUND

The Department of Health (DOH) is working with local and federal partners to slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) into Pennsylvania. This fact sheet has key information to help your business prepare for the spread of COVID-19. Due to this evolving situation, we encourage you to visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) COVID-19 webpage](#) for frequently updated information, guidance, and materials.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only guidance from the CDC or DOH. Do not make determinations of risk based on an employee's race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

WHAT SHOULD BUSINESSES DO?

The CDC has issued [interim guidance for businesses and employers](#) with the following recommended strategies:

1. Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
2. Separate sick employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (cough, shortness of breath).
3. Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees.
4. Perform routine environmental cleaning.
5. Advise employees before traveling to take important steps.
6. Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

WHAT IF WE HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHOSE HEALTH IS BEING MONITORED?

Employees returning from travel to a [high risk country](#) should:

1. Self-monitor for symptoms like fever, cough, or trouble breathing.
2. Call **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)** immediately if they become sick.
3. Tell their doctor's office or emergency room *before* arriving that they have become sick after visiting a country at high risk of COVID-19.
4. Know how to [self-monitor and practice social distancing](#).
5. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, 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).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

DOH encourages businesses to increase education on preventing illnesses such as the cold, flu and also the coronavirus:

- **Wash** hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

DOH – <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx> (includes posters for download/print)

CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

Date Created: 3/8/2020

Date Updated: 3/11/2020