Develop an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan

If one does not already exist, develop an infectious disease preparedness and response plan that can help guide protective action against COVID-19. Stay abreast of guidance from federal, state, local, tribal, and/ or territorial health agencies and consider how to incorporate recommendations and resources into workplace plans.

Consider the following when developing a plan:
- Where, how, and to what sources of SARS-CoV-2 might workers be exposed
- Non – Occupational risk factors at home and in community settings
- Workers' individual risk factors (e.g., older age; presence of chronic medical conditions, including immunocompromising conditions; pregnancy).
- Controls necessary to address those risks

Follow federal, state, local, tribal, and/or territorial recommendations regarding developments of contingency plans for situations that may arise as a result of outbreaks, such as:
- Increased rates of worker absenteeism.
- The need for social distancing, staggered work shifts, downsizing operations, delivering services remotely, and other exposure-reducing measures.
- Options for conducting essential operations with a reduced workforce, including cross-training workers across different jobs in order to continue operations or deliver surge services.
- Interrupted supply chains or delayed deliveries

Prepare to Implement Basic Infection Prevention Measures

All employers should emphasize basic infection prevention measures and implement good hygiene and infection control practices, including:
- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing
- Encourage workers to stay home when sick and encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes
- Provide tissues and trash receptables
- Explore establishing policies and practices, such as flexible worksites and flexible work hours
- Discourage workers from sharing other workers' work tools and equipment
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment and other elements of the work environment.

Develop Policies and Procedures for Prompt Identification and Isolation of Sick People

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious 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
- Develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID – 19

Additional Safety Resources
For questions, please contact AGC of California's Safety & Health Council liaison, Kate Mergen
mergenk@agc-ca.org | 714-497-6163
Please visit CDC.gov for more information about the flu and coronavirus.

- Take steps to limit spread of respiratory secretions of a person who may have COVID -19, such as providing a face mask.
- Isolate people suspected of having COVID – 19 from those with confirmed cases of the virus to prevent further transmission
- Restrict number of personnel entering isolation areas
- Protect workers in close contact with a sick person or who have prolonged contact with such persons by using safe work practices.

Develop, Implement, and Communicate about Workplace Flexibilities and Protections

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
- Ensure sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contact or temporary employees about importance of sick employees staying home
- 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
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member
- 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
- Work with insurance companies and state and local health agencies to provide information to workers and customers about medical care in the event of a COVID – 19 outbreak

Implement 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. In most cases, a combination of control measures will be necessary to protect workers from exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

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:
- Installing high-efficiency air filters and/or physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards
- Increasing ventilation rates in the work environment
- Specialized negative pressure ventilation in some settings (e.g., airborne infection isolation rooms in healthcare settings and specialized autopsy suites in mortuary settings).

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: encouraging workers to stay home, minimizing contact among workers, discontinuing nonessential travel to location with COVID – 19 outbreaks and developing emergency communication plans.

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 include providing resources and work environment that promotes personal hygiene, requiring regular hand washing or using alcohol-based hand rubs and post handwashing signs in restrooms.

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. Examples of PPE include gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks, and respiratory protection, when appropriate. All types of PPE are selected based upon the hazard to the worker and must be properly fitted. All PPE must be properly removed, cleaned and disposed of to avoid contamination.

Follow Existing OSHA Standards

While there is no specific OSHA standard covering SARS-CoV-2 exposure, some OSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Among the most relevant are:

- OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards. See: www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910#1910_Subpart_I
- The General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970, 29 USC 654(a)(1). See: www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/completeoshact
- More information on OSHA standards and requirements. See: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/standards.html

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