COVID-19 SAFETY

Dear Domestic Violence leaders, advocates, and TCFV members,

There is extensive internet and media information regarding COVID-19/ novel-coronavirus. We want to make sure that your agency has all the tools to maintain a safe environment. This includes keeping up with accurate and up-to-date information. We strongly recommend to check the CDC website regularly and to stay in contact with your local Health Department. To help you maintain a safe workplace, shelter, and nonresidential center, we have created a booklet that is hopefully helpful. It includes the following information:

» CDC Business Specific Guidelines and Information *(page 3)*

» Planning for a Possible COVID-19 Outbreak in the U.S. *(page 6)*

» CDC's Developing Risk Assessments *(page 7)*

» Travel Guidance *(page 8)*

» Additional Resources *(page 10)*

» John Hopkins Interactive Web-based Dashboard *(page 10)*

» Texas Domestic Violence Shelter and Nonresidential Guidelines and Information to Prevent Acute Respiratory Illnesses *(page 11)*

» Cleaning Products Approved by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *(page 11)*

Remember to visit the following websites regularly:

» The CDC Website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

» The CDC Business-Specific Guidelines and Information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html

» The TCFV Website: Webpage containing COVID-19 specific guidelines and precautions.

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at mangelelli@tcfv.org.

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CDC Business Specific Guidelines and Information

Source: CDC website as of March 5, 2020
[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#)

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19.

Recommended strategies for employers to use now:

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

» Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

» Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

» Ensure that your 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 non-punitive 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 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.

Separate sick employees:

» CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:

» Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.

» Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.

» Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

» Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace.

» Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.

» Visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands webpage for more information.

Perform routine environmental cleaning:

» Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

» No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.

» Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:

» Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found at on the CDC website.

» Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

» Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

» If outside the United States, sick employees should follow your company's policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance

company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

Additional Measures in Response to Currently Occurring Sporadic Importations of the COVID-19:

» 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.

» 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).

» Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

Planning for a Possible COVID-19 Outbreak in the U.S.

The severity of illness or how many people will fall ill from COVID-19 is unknown at this time. If there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S., employers should plan to be able to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of severity and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. For the general American public, such as workers in non-healthcare settings and where it is unlikely that work tasks create an increased risk of exposures to COVID-19, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. The CDC and its partners will continue to monitor national and international data on the severity of illness caused by COVID-19, will disseminate the results of these ongoing surveillance assessments, and will make additional recommendations as needed.

Planning Considerations

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the US. They should identify and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following: (a) reducing transmission among staff, (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, (c) maintaining business operations, and (d) minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains. Some of the key considerations when making decisions on appropriate responses are:

» Disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community where the business is located;

» Impact of disease on employees that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for COVID-19 adverse health complications. Inform employees that some people may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.

» Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, dismissals of early childhood programs and K-12 schools due to high levels of absenteeism or illness:

   • Employers should plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace. Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.

   • Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.

   • Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products. Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).

» Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their business infectious disease outbreak response plan based on the condition in each locality.

» Coordination with national, state and local health officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside. Since the intensity of an outbreak may differ according to geographic location, local health officials will be issuing guidance specific to their communities.

Important Considerations for Creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan

All employers should be ready to implement strategies to protect their workforce from COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations. During a COVID-19 outbreak, all sick employees should stay home and away from the workplace, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene should be encouraged, and routine cleaning of commonly touched surfaces should be performed regularly.

Employers should:

» Ensure the plan is flexible and involve your employees in developing and reviewing your plan.

» Conduct a focused discussion or exercise using your plan, to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or problems that need to be corrected.

» Share your plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them.

» Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Recommendations for an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan:

» Identify possible work-related exposure and health risks to your employees. OSHA has more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures to COVID-19.

» Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the Department of Labor's and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's websites).

» Explore whether you can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies. For employees who are able to telework, supervisors should encourage employees to telework instead of coming into the workplace until symptoms are completely resolved. Ensure that you have the information technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees who may be able to work from home.

» Identify essential business functions, essential jobs or roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted.

» Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's infectious disease outbreak response plan, altering business operations (e.g., possibly changing or closing operations in affected areas), and transferring business knowledge to key employees. Work closely with your local health officials to identify these triggers.

» Plan to minimize exposure between employees and between employees and the public, if public health officials call for social distancing.

» Establish a process to communicate information to employees and business partners on your infectious disease outbreak response plans and latest COVID-19 information. Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.

» In some communities, early childhood programs and K-12 schools may be dismissed, particularly if COVID-19 worsens. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from school. Businesses and other employers should prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies for these employees.

» Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies; employers should take the time now to learn about plans in place in each community where they have a business.

» If there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in the US, consider canceling non-essential business travel to additional countries per travel guidance on the CDC website.

  • Travel restrictions may be enacted by other countries which may limit the ability of employees to return home if they become sick while on travel status.

  • Consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events.

» Engage Texas and local health departments to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information.

Texas:

Texas	(800) 705-8868	(800) 705-8868
Texas, Dallas	(877) 605-2660	(214) 819-2004 or (877) 605-2660
Texas, Harris County	(713) 755-5000	(713) 755-5000
Texas, Houston	(832) 393-5080	(832) 393-5080
Texas, San Antonio	(210) 207-8876	(210) 207-8876

Local: National Association of County and City Health Officials

Additional Resources

CDC Guidance

» [COVID-19 Website](#)

» [What You Need to Know About COVID-19](#)

» [What to Do If You Are Sick With COVID-19](#)

» [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings](#)

» [Health Alert Network](#)

» [Travelers' Health Website](#)

» [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Small Business International Travel Resource Travel Planner](#)

» [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Ships](#)

Other Federal Agencies and Partners

» [OSHA Guidance](#)

John Hopkins University Tracking COVID-19

» https://systems.jhu.edu

» http://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/85320e2ea5424dfaaa75ae62e5c06e61

Texas Domestic Violence Shelter and Nonresidential Guidelines and Information to Prevent Acute Respiratory Illnesses, including COVID-19

Source: CDC, American Chemistry Council and Best Practices as of March 8,2020

The following interim guidance may help prevent exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. This guideline also provides considerations specific to Texas family violence centers providing shelter and nonresidential services.

Take extra precautions:

» Visit the CDC website *regularly*:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html

» Install portable hand washing stations and/or hand sanitizer dispensers at all entrances.

» Consider hiring an outside company to do deep sanitation in addition to normal cleaning.

» Keep up with and add to your normal supply of hand soap, hand sanitizers, tissues, gloves, disinfectant wipes, Clorox and other disinfectant cleaners.

» Use products approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against viral pathogens (can be used during the 2019 COVID-19 outbreak):
https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf

» Communicate with clients about the concerns regarding the virus by:

  • Placing flyers throughout the shelter and outreach/nonresidential facilities, such as by the front desks.

  • Talking directly with clients, encouraging all individuals to use hand sanitizers immediately upon entering the facilities.

  • Scheduling shelter-wide meetings to remind individuals about hand washing protocols, symptoms, and the accompanying protocol.

  • Balancing the need to stay calm and proactive.

What to do if your agency has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 for either a shelter or nonresidential client, employee, volunteer, or vendor:

» Follow current and updated public health and safety guidelines. Should those guidelines or resources not be available, use the best judgment based on available information.

» Contact your local health department to determine:

  • How to quarantine a person (and family) that does not have a home. Determine if the **shelter client**, with a confirmed or suspected case, should be quarantined onsite or at another facility. Determine if your facility should be closed to new incoming clients for at least 14 days.

  • If a **nonresidential client** has a confirmed or suspected case, determine if your facility should be closed for 14 days.

  • If an **employee, volunteer, or vendor** has a confirmed or suspected case, determine what clients may have been exposed. Determine if your facility (or facilities) should be closed for 14 days. Go to CDC website or follow your local health department to follow instructions on how to conduct a risk assessment: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html

  • How to inform fellow employees, volunteers, vendors and clients of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and your facilities AND **maintain confidentiality** as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA)

  • What sanitizing process should be implemented.

  • The process for informing all exposed individuals and determining if they should be quarantined.

» Contact your funders of any service disruption. For HHSC funded family violence centers, HHSC requests that you inform them of any known or suspected COVID-19 cases.