

Information for State Employees in Preparation for COVID-19

When dealing with highly contagious diseases like influenza, *employees need to stay home and not infect co-workers, clients, or the general public.* In the case of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently advises that common symptoms include flu-like symptoms (fever (100° F or higher), cough or sore throat, headache or body aches, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting) or symptoms of respiratory illness (fever (100° F or higher), cough, and shortness of breath). **In order to slow or stop the spread of these illnesses, it is critical to follow these instructions.**

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and people who are taking care of patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (at home or in a health care setting).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - For information about handwashing, see [CDC's Handwashing](#) website.
 - For information specific to healthcare providers, see [CDC's Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#).

Employees who have flu-like symptoms (fever of 100° F or higher (with an oral thermometer), cough or sore throat, headache or body aches, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting) **or symptoms of acute respiratory illness** (fever of 100° F or higher using an oral thermometer), coughing, shortness of breath) should stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever, 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). This is critical to prevent passing on the flu to others since people remain contagious even after they are feeling better.

Employees who are sick with COVID-19 or suspect they are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, will self-quarantine for 14 days and may not return to work until the quarantine has concluded and the employee is no longer considered infectious. In addition, employees should follow the [steps identified by the CDC](#) to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

- **Employees returning from a [CDC Level 3 travel advisory area](#) (South Korea, China, Italy, or Iran),** should not return to the workplace for 14 days. To protect the community, employees are strongly encouraged to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) during this time. Employees returning from any location under a [Level 2 CDC Travel Health Notice](#), are advised to self-monitor for 14 days for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath). In either instance, employees should notify their supervisor to discuss work arrangements during their absence.
- The CDC recommends 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.

Employees with a chronic illness such as asthma or diabetes, a weakened immune system, or are pregnant, should consult with your health care provider to determine if additional actions are needed. If in doubt, contact your health care provider for advice.

For more information or questions about this information, please contact your local Human Resources professional.