

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



What Warehousing Workers Need to Know about COVID-19

Updated Aug. 25, 2020 [Print](#)

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness (see list of [symptoms](#)) caused by a virus (SARS-COV-2).

COVID-19 can sometimes cause serious complications. [People at increased risk for severe illness](#) include:

- Older adults
- People of any age who have [underlying medical conditions](#)

More Info for Warehousing

[Employers](#) >

How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning about it. Here's what we currently know:

- The virus that causes COVID-19 mainly [spreads](#) from person-to-person:
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You can get the virus from people who don't seem sick or don't have any [symptoms](#).
- You might be able to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus, and then touching your face, mouth, nose, or eyes.

As a warehouse worker, you might come into contact with the virus at your job when:

- In [close contact](#) with customers, coworkers, and truck drivers.

- Touching or handling frequently touched surfaces, equipment, or merchandise and then touching your face, mouth, nose, or eyes.

How You Can Protect Yourself and Others

Stay home if you are having **symptoms** of COVID-19.

- Follow [CDC recommended steps](#) if you are sick.
- Do not return to work until you meet the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#).
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about when it's safe for you to return to work.
- Follow [CDC recommended precautions](#) and tell your supervisor if you are well, but someone you live with or someone you have had recent [close contact](#) with has COVID-19.

Stay at least 6 feet away from customers and coworkers, when possible.

Wear a cloth face covering or [mask](#) in public, and at work if permitted by your employer, when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Face coverings or masks may prevent people who don't know they have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.

- Be careful when putting on and taking off cloth face coverings or masks:
 - Do not touch your face covering or mask while wearing it.
 - Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes while taking off your covering or mask.
 - Wash your hands before putting on and after taking off your covering or mask.
 - Wash your covering or mask after each use, if possible.
- Ensure that wearing your cloth face covering or mask does not create a new risk (for example, interferes with driving or vision, or contributes to heat-related illness) that exceeds its COVID-19 related benefits of slowing the spread of the virus.
- If you are concerned about the use of cloth face coverings or masks at your workplace, discuss your concerns with your employer.

Be aware of contact with frequently touched surfaces.

- Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose, or eyes, especially when handling frequently touched items.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after contact with or cleaning frequently touched surfaces. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You don't need to wear gloves if you wash your hands regularly (unless they are already required for your job).

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol if soap and water aren't available.
- Wash your hands at these key times:
 - Before, during, and after preparing food
 - Before eating food
 - After using the toilet
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings or masks
 - Before and after work, and when on breaks at work
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing any personal protective equipment (PPE) such as work gloves or eye protection
 - After touching shared objects or surfaces such as tools or equipment

Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes with bare hands or gloved hands.

- Replace work gloves when they become damaged (for example, if they are ripped or torn).
- Work gloves should be washed regularly on the highest temperature setting allowed for the glove material.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

How to Cope with Stress

Mental health is an important part of worker safety and health. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in the ways many people work and connect with others, which may raise feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression. It is important to pay attention to these in yourself and others and be aware of resources available to manage them.




Information and resources about mental health, knowing signs of stress, taking steps to manage stress, and knowing where to go if you need help are available [here](#).

How Your Employer Can Protect You

Your employer should develop a COVID-19 response plan and share it with you. We created a [fact sheet to help your employer](#).

How To Get More Information

Talk to your employer or supervisor, or whoever is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Use these sources for more information on reducing the risk of worker exposures to virus that causes COVID-19:

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic: COVID-19](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Non-healthcare Workplaces: Information for Employers](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19](#) 
- [OSHA Guidelines on Preparing Workplaces for COVID](#)  
- CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | website: cdc.gov/info

Last Updated Aug. 25, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)