

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



COVID-19 Employer Information for Warehousing

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

is a respiratory illness (see list of [symptoms](#)) caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2.

More Info for Warehousing

[Employees](#)



Here's what we currently know:

- The main way the virus spreads is from person-to-person through respiratory droplets.
- You may also be able to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching your face, mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The virus may be spread by people who do not have symptoms.

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](#)

As a warehousing employer, your workforce might come into contact with the virus when:

- In [close contact](#) (within about 6 feet) with other people at the worksite, which can include customers, coworkers, contractors, and truck drivers.
- Touching or handling frequently touched surfaces and equipment, and then touching their face, mouth, nose, or eyes.

How You Can Protect Your Staff and Others and Slow the Spread

Evaluate your workplace to identify scenarios where workers cannot maintain [social](#)

[distancing](#) of at least 6 feet from each other and customers. Use appropriate combinations of controls following the [hierarchy of controls](#) to address these situations to limit the spread of COVID-19. A committee of both workers and management may be most effective at recognizing all scenarios.

While protecting workers, it is important to note that control recommendations or interventions to reduce risk of COVID-19 must be compatible with any safety programs and personal protective equipment (PPE) normally required for the job task. Approaches to consider may include the following:

Create a COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety Plan

Review the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) and the [Resuming Business Toolkit](#) for guidelines and recommendations that all employers can use to protect their employees.

- Continue to follow any state or local regulations for warehousing in addition to the recommendations here.
- Identify an on-site workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 assessment and control.
 - When developing plans, include all employees in the workplace, for example: operational staff, utility employees, relief employees, janitorial staff, maintenance, and supervisory staff.
 - If customers or contractors enter the workspace, develop plans to communicate with them regarding modification to work or service processes.
 - Notify all workers that COVID-19 concerns should be directed to the identified coordinator.
- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.
 - Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisals, and ensure employees are aware of these policies.
 - If contractors are employed in the workplace, develop plans to communicate with the contracting company regarding modifications to work processes.
- Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and/or temperature screening) of employees on scheduled workdays.
 - Screening options could include having employees self-screen before arriving at work or having on-site screening by taking employees' temperatures and assessing potential symptoms prior to beginning work. (see [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#))
 - Make sure employees can maintain 6 feet of distance while waiting for screening, if done on-site.
 - Make employee health screenings as private as possible and maintain the confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history.

Take action if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19


- Immediately separate employees who report with or develop symptoms at work from other employees and arrange for private transport home. These employees should [self-isolate](#) and contact their health care provider immediately.

- Close off any areas that were used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person, if it is practical to do so.
- Perform enhanced [cleaning and disinfection](#) after anyone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the workplace. Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared equipment used by the sick person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces or objects. If other workers do not have access to these areas or items, wait 24 hours (or as long as possible) before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 should immediately notify their employer of their results.
 - Sick employees should follow [CDC recommended steps](#) to self-isolate or seek care. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers.

Develop hazard controls using the hierarchy of controls to prevent infection among workers. You may be able to include a combination of controls noted below.

- **Engineering Controls (Isolate people from the hazards)**

Alter the workspace using engineering controls to prevent exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Modify the alignment of workstations where feasible. For example, redesign workstations so workers can be at least six feet apart and are not facing each other.
- Establish, where possible, physical barriers between workers, and between workers and customers.
 - Use strip curtains, plastic barriers, or similar materials to create impermeable dividers or partitions.
- Close or limit access to common areas where employees are likely to congregate and interact, such as break rooms, parking lots, and in entrance/exit areas.
- Consider making foot-traffic single direction in narrow or confined areas, such as aisles and stairwells, to encourage single-file movement at a 6-foot distance.
- Use visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, and signs to remind workers to maintain distance of 6 feet from others, including at their workstation and in break areas.
- Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol in multiple locations throughout the workplace for workers and customers.
 - Use touch-free stations where possible.
 - Make sure restrooms are well stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Make sure the workspace is [well ventilated](#)  .
 - Work with facilities management to adjust the ventilation so that the maximum amount of fresh air is delivered to occupied spaces while maintaining the humidity at 40-60%. If possible, increase filter efficiency of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units to the highest functional level.

- Portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units may be considered to remove contaminants in the air of poorly ventilated areas.
- Ensure proper ventilation and that exhaust from air power lift devices are vented away from workers.
- Additional considerations for improving the building ventilation system can be found in the [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers and COVID-19 Employer Information for Office Buildings](#).

- **Administrative Controls (Change the way people work)**

Provide training and other administrative policies to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

- All workers should have a basic understanding of COVID-19, [how the disease is thought to spread](#), what the [symptoms](#) of the disease are, and what measures can be taken to prevent or minimize the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Trainings should include the importance of [social distancing](#) (maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more when possible), [wearing cloth face coverings or masks](#) appropriately, [covering coughs and sneezes](#), [washing hands](#), [cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces](#), not sharing personal items or tools/equipment unless absolutely necessary, and not touching their face, mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Workers should be encouraged to go home or stay home if they feel sick. Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance, and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Use digital inventory tracking systems to limit personal contact.
- Conduct virtual meetings.
- Consider maintaining small groups of workers in teams (cohorting) to reduce the number of coworkers each person is exposed to.
 - Create work zones to separate teams and reduce contact with other workers.
- Reduce the number of staff on-site at one time by increasing the number of shifts, staggering shifts, decreasing the overlap between shifts, and increasing facility hours of operation.
 - Implement flexible worksites (telework) for office staff to the extent feasible.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.
 - If surfaces are visibly dirty, clean them using a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.
 - Use products that are [EPA-registered](#) [☑](#), [diluted household bleach solutions](#), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, appropriate for surface disinfection.
 - Provide cleaning materials and conduct targeted and more frequent cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (benches, stands, conveyors, lift assist machines, floors, forklifts, pallet jacks, skids, totes, carts, box cutters, conveyor rollers, ladders, packaging equipment, tablets, phones, paperwork, merchandise, countertops, doorknobs, toilets, tables, light

switches, phones, faucets, sinks, keyboards, etc.)

- Close lines between shifts to disinfect frequently touched surfaces in those areas.
- Conduct frequent cleaning of employee break rooms, rest areas, and other common areas.
- Provide employees adequate time and access to soap, clean water, and single use paper towels for handwashing.
 - Remind employees to [wash their hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, they should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - In addition to adequate supplies of soap, clean water, and paper towels, provide hand sanitizer, tissues, and no touch waste baskets in the restrooms.
- Maintain social distancing in the warehouse.
- Limit the number of people in the warehouse at one time. (Consult state and local guidance if available.)
- Remind employees that people may be able to [spread](#) the virus that causes COVID-19 even if they do not show symptoms. Consider all close interactions (within 6 feet) with employees, customers, and others as a potential source of exposure.
- [Post signs and reminders](#) at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on social distancing, hand hygiene, use of cloth face coverings or masks, and cough and sneeze etiquette. Signs should be accessible for people with disabilities, easy to understand, and may include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.
- Post a contact number outside the facility for visitors and drivers and clearly designate a meeting location where social distancing can be maintained and important information on COVID precautions can be shared.
- Communication and training should be accessible for people with disabilities, easy to understand, in preferred language(s) spoken or read by the employees, and include accurate and timely information.
 - Emphasize use of images (infographics) that account for language differences.
 - Training should be reinforced with signs (preferably infographics), placed in strategic locations. CDC has free, simple [posters available to download](#) and print, some of which are translated into different languages.
- Use cloth face coverings or [masks](#) as appropriate.
 - Cloth face coverings or masks are intended to protect other people—not the wearer. They are not considered to be personal protective equipment.
 - Emphasize that care must be taken when putting on and taking off cloth face coverings or masks to ensure that the worker or the cloth face covering or mask does not become contaminated.
 - Cloth face coverings or masks should be routinely laundered, if possible.
 - Ensure cloth face coverings or masks do not create a new risk (e.g.,

interferes with driving or vision, or contributes to heat-related illness) that exceeds their COVID-19 related benefits of slowing the spread of the virus. Cloth face coverings or masks should also not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove it without assistance. CDC provides information on [adaptations and alternatives](#) that should be considered when cloth face coverings or masks may not be feasible (e.g., people who are deaf or hard of hearing, have intellectual or developmental disabilities, or sensory sensitivities).

- Employees should consider carrying a spare cloth face covering or mask.
 - If the cloth face covering or mask becomes wet, visibly soiled, or contaminated at work, it should be removed and stored to be laundered later.
- Consider requiring visitors to the workplace (service personnel, customers) to also wear cloth face coverings or masks.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE is the last step in the hierarchy of controls because it is more difficult to use effectively than other measures. To be protective and not introduce an additional hazard, the use of PPE requires characterization of the environment, knowledge of the hazard, training, and consistent correct use. This is why special emphasis is given to administrative and engineering controls when addressing occupational hazards, including when applying guidance to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, use of PPE such as surgical masks or N95 respirators is being prioritized for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current [CDC guidance](#), unless they were required for your job before the pandemic.




How You Can Help Your Staff and Others Cope with Stress

Mental health is an important component of worker safety and health. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in the ways many people work and interact with others, which may lead to increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. It is important to pay attention to these in yourself and your staff and encourage staff to take advantage of available resources for managing mental health issues.

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

How To Get More Information

You, as the employer, are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and informing employees of the hazards in your workplace. You can utilize these additional sources for more information on reducing the risk of exposures to COVID-19 at work:

- [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](https://www.cdc.gov/info)

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