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RE: Coronavirus Employer Resource Guide

BACKGROUND: The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) that was first detected in China and has now emerged in almost 90 locations internationally, including over 500 confirmed cases within the United States as of March 9, 2020. The following Coronavirus Resource Guide provides a comprehensive resource to best prepare for employment disruptions as COVID-19 cases continue to be discovered.

COVID-19 BASICS: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with [MERS-CoV](#), [SARS-CoV](#), and now COVID-19.

- **How COVID-19 Spreads:** The CDC considers the virus highly contagious and suspects it is spread mainly from person-to-person contact including between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- **Symptoms:** Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. The CDC reports that symptoms may be more severe for the elderly and those who suffer from medical conditions that weaken their immune system. The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

NOTE: Call your healthcare provider immediately if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of the virus.

- **Prevention:** There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The CDC recommends the following everyday preventative 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.
 - 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.

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS:

- **Educate your employees**
 - [What you need to know about coronavirus](#)
 - [What to do when you are sick](#)
 - [CDC Coronavirus Travel Guidance](#)
 - [Coronavirus advice for the public: Myth busters](#)
- **Encourage standard hygiene practices**
 - Encourage frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water - [Hand Washing Guidance](#)
 - Promote coughing and sneezing etiquette such as keeping noses and mouths covered - [Coughing and Sneezing Etiquette](#)
 - Urge employees who have not had a flu shot to get one as soon as possible
- **Employer practices**
 - Employer guidance - [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus \(2019-2020\)](#)
 - Be prepared! - [Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist](#); [Coronavirus: What can employers do to prepare?](#); and [OSHA guide on preparing workplaces for Influenza Pandemics](#)
 - Understand your liability - [Coronavirus Employer Liability Issues](#)
 - Perform routine environmental cleaning - [Environmental Cleaning Recommendations](#)
- **Planning considerations**
 - All employers should consider how to best decrease the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace. Employers are encouraged to identify and communicate their objectives, which may include the following: reducing transmission among staff, protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, maintaining business operations, and minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chain.
 - Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members along with the dismissals of daycare and K-12 schools.
- **Additional resources**
 - [OSHA Coronavirus Guidance](#)
 - [World Health Organization](#)