

COVID-19 Webinar Questions

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1. **What can my company do to lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission in my workplace?**
 - a. **Education**
 - i. Up-to-date education and staff training promoting frequent hand washing.
 - ii. Encourage proper respiratory hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes.
 - iii. Education on COVID-19 and the symptoms associated with this disease.
 - iv. Encourage workers to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
 - v. Encourage individuals to stay home if they are ill.
 - vi. Provide a simple pathway to report illness quickly and clear steps to be allowed home quickly.
 - vii. Discourage workers from using other worker's phones, desks, offices, and work tools.
 - b. **Worksite preparation**
 - i. Have soap and running water to help workers and visitors wash their hands frequently.
 - ii. If you are unable to provide soap and water, ensure alcohol-based hand rubs with at least 70% alcohol.
 - iii. Provide employees and visitors with tissue and trash receptacles.
 - iv. Increase the distance between employees to decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19.
 - c. **Company policies**
 - i. Ensure flexible sick leave policies, including permission to stay home with sick family members.
 - ii. Encourage employees to work from home if possible.
 - iii. Replace face-to-face meetings with video-conferencing.
 - iv. Stop all non-essential travel.
 - v. Stagger shifts so less people are on-site at any given time.
 - vi. Don't require a sick note before allowing individuals be allowed to be off work.

d. Emergency actions

- i. Quickly identify and isolate sick individuals.
- ii. Move them away from other workers and customers.
- iii. You may not have an isolation room, but designate a room in advance with doors that can be closed and that is away from other people until the ill person can be removed from your site.

2. What additional environmental cleaning practices should my company implement to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19?

- a. Close off areas used by sick people, open outside windows and doors to increase air circulation, wait 24 hours to clean and disinfect if possible.
- b. Clean and disinfect all areas used by sick people such as offices, bathrooms, shared equipment (like tablets, keyboards, and remote controls).
- c. While cleaning, wear disposable gloves and gowns. Wash with soap and water immediately after removing gloves and gowns.
- d. Clean surfaces with soap and water, especially high-touch areas such as tables, door knobs, light switches, handles, desks, phones and keyboards.
- e. Disinfect using household bleach solutions for appropriate surfaces (to make a bleach solution mix 5 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water), use alcohol solutions with 70% alcohol, or use regular household cleaners and disinfectants. For soft surfaces, clean with soap and water. For electronics, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays with at least 70% alcohol.

3. What should my company do with elderly employees or employees with chronic high-risk medical conditions?

Individuals who are 65 years of age or older, or individuals with chronic health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or those who have poor immune systems are more likely to develop serious illness if they develop COVID-19 infection. These individuals need to avoid the risk of coming into contact with COVID-19. The best option is to have high-risk employees stay home. If that is not possible, we recommend they get reassigned to an area where they are not exposed to other people – both customers and coworkers – by having them work in an isolated area.

4. What criteria should my company use to determine if I should send a sick employee home?

All employees who are sick with fever, body aches and chills, or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) should be sent home.

5. Should my company screen all workers by measuring their temperature as they come to work?

The CDC recommends performing temperature checks on individuals as they enter the work place.

6. What is considered a fever?

A temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater is considered a fever.

7. If I have an employee who has recently travelled by plane domestically or internationally, or has been a passenger on a cruise ship, what should my company do?

All individuals who have travelled recently should self-quarantine at home for 14 days and call their medical provider if they become ill. Healthcare workers will use different criteria due to essential service designation.

8. I have an employee who was at my company worksite who has tested positive for COVID-19. What should my company do?

The individual should be off work for 14 days. The state health department will investigate who has been in contact with that individual and will provide recommendations to these contacts. Additionally, the areas or surfaces that the individual may have touched should be cleaned and disinfected.

9. I have an employee who has a family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19. What should my company do?

This individual should be away from work at home on self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor symptoms. They should call their medical provider if they become ill for further instructions. Again, healthcare and essential workers may follow different guidelines due to the essential service designation.

10. My employee has been off work due to a respiratory infection. When can they safely return to work?

They should be off work until they meet the following three criteria:

- a. No fever for 3 days 72 hours and not used fever-reducing medications AND
- b. Their respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) are improved AND
- c. 7 days have passed since the onset of their symptoms.

In areas where community spread is rampant, or you are in an essential job classification, you may use these same criteria for those that had been advised to self-quarantine for 14 days.

11. Should my employees be wearing masks at work if someone at home has been sick?

If you are sick or at risk because you have sick family members at home, you should not be coming to work. The CDC recommends that all individuals should cover their mouth and nose with a mask.

12. With the COVID-19 pandemic, what should my company do with routine surveillance exams, pre-employment physicals or drug screens?

As we are trying to slow the rate of spread of COVID-19, so as not to overwhelm our health care system with seriously ill patients, companies should evaluate these and consider deferring non-essential examinations until the pandemic has subsided. Employer-sponsored wellness screenings should be postponed. In some cases, pre-employment examinations may be urgently needed to hire new employees who are crucial to our fight against the pandemic. These should not be delayed. The drug testing rules for the DOT have not relaxed the rules on required drug and alcohol testing. However if an employee does not agree to go to a collection site because of the fear of contracting COVID-19, the employer must take this into consideration in determining if this is a refusal to test. Non-DOT drug and alcohol testing is at the discretion of the employer.

13. Where should my company go for up-to-date resources related to new developments?

The Resources page of www.sanfordoccm.com will be regularly updated with current resources as they relate to COVID-19 and employers.

14. How many symptoms of the following symptoms – fever, cough, shortness of breath - does an employee need to experience before we ask them to go home?

Because COVID-19 can cause very few symptoms in mild cases, a yes to any of these questions means the individual is sick and should go home. The next question to ask is has the cough or shortness of breath been present for months. If these symptoms are not new, then the individual would not need to be sent home.

15. What precautions should employees who commute together take?

If anyone is ill or is a high-risk category, they should not ride together. ~~If not,~~ Distance each individual as much as possible. Consider using separate vehicles if at all possible.

16. How long does the virus survive on a surface? If a room is not used for several days, could we get by without sanitizing it?

Tests have been performed on this and the virus can survive on surfaces for hours to days. One day on cardboard and longer on plastic and stainless steel surfaces. The safest recommendation is to sanitize.

17. What recommendations do you have for employers whose workers are on a rotation schedule where they work in state for several weeks and then usually travel home to another state on days off? Is there a higher risk for those who fly versus drive?

If at all possible, such travel should be postponed. Being in an airport or in an airplane with many other individuals puts individuals at risk for COVID-19 infection.

18. How long after symptoms decrease is the person still contagious to transmit the pandemic?

The science on this is evolving. The answer for now is that we are letting people return to work after 14 days and in certain situations after 7 days as per question 10.

19. What do you suggest to help verify the illness if a provider note is not suggested? How do employers verify and pay for leave with no verification?

At this time, we are asking companies to be flexible with their need for sick notes and rely on trusting the word of their employer.

20. When can our areas expect to peak and what will that look like? Would you expect any more restrictive measure to be issued?

When the peak will occur in our region depends on how successfully we have been with social distancing. Further restrictive measures will be issued based on how quickly the number of cases grow or dwindle.