COVID-19 and Business Information for Administrators and Employees

On March 16, 2020 Governor Inslee announced a statewide ban on gatherings of 50 or more, closure of all on-site food and beverage services, entertainment, leisure activities, and non-essential services. The purpose of this ban is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Washington State.

Governor Inslee also asked Washingtonians to practice social distancing by staying six feet away from others. He advised workplaces to implement social distancing measures and make the most of telecommuting options for as many employees as possible.

Below is guidance for business administrators in handling sick or possibly sick employees with COVID-19.

- **Employees who have been sick with or without COVID-19:** Do not require a doctor's note. Doctors may be very busy and not able to provide this in a timely way.
- **Employees who show signs of COVID-19 (fever, cough, or trouble breathing):** Place them in a private room away from others. Ask them to wear a face mask. Notify your local health department right away. They will tell you what to do.
- **What to do if an employee has COVID-19:** Keep it confidential. This is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Inform close contacts of the sick employee that they may have been close to someone with COVID-19. Direct employees to the Department of Health webpage or the Coronavirus assessment tool developed by Microsoft and Providence.
- **Employees who have a family member at home with COVID-19 should:** Notify their employer. Stay home and avoid public places for 14 days. Keep track of their health for fever, cough, and trouble breathing for 14 days after the last day they were in contact with the sick person.

What can I do to prevent COVID-19 in my workplace for those who can't telework?

Create social distancing in the workplace:
- Place staff members at least 6 feet away from each other.
- Do not have in-person meetings.
- If you must have an in-person meeting, meet in a large room and be at least 6 feet from one another. Meet for as short as you can.
- Close lunch rooms and limit access to areas where people gather.
- Limit visitors.

Tell sick employees to stay home:
- Make sure your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Talk with companies who provide contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home. Encourage them to develop leave policies that do not punish employees.
- Do not require a doctor's note from employees who have been sick.
- Maintain policies that allow employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more workers may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is normal.

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Practice good health habits:

- Place posters around your building that support staying home when sick, how to cough and sneeze, and keeping hands clean. Put them up in places where people will see them.
- Make sure you have tissues and trash cans throughout the building.
- Have everyone wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not around, clean hands with a hand gel that has at least 60% alcohol in it. Make sure these supplies are always around and in multiple locations.
- Provide gloves when staff clean and check rooms and any areas people have access to.
- Tell everyone not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Visit coughing and sneezing and handwashing webpages for more information.

Clean all high touch areas: (for more information, go to CDC website for businesses)

- Clean all high touch areas like stair handrails, elevator buttons, fitness room equipment, and door handles. Use cleaning products that are usually used in these areas. Follow the directions on the label.
- No extra cleaning beyond routine cleaning is needed at this time.
- Provide cleaning wipes so that high touch objects (for example, doorknobs, remote controls, keycards) can be wiped down before each use.
- Only use cleaning products registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Read the label and follow the directions on how to use it. Here is the EPA list of registered cleaning products labeled for use against the new coronavirus. **Note:** There may be more cleaning products that meet EPA standards that are not on this list. The EPA updates the list often.

What should I do to protect my employees from COVID-19 if they travel?

Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Travel Health Notices for up to date safety and security alerts for each country. Consider if you should delay or cancel travel plans right now.

Where can I get good information about COVID-19?

Sharing correct information is the best thing we can do to keep the wrong information from getting out. Check the Department of Health's website at www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus for updates on COVID-19.

You can also call Washington's call center at 1-800-525-0127 and press #. The call center will answer questions about what is happening in our state or how the virus is spread. If you do not speak English, tell them you need an interpreter.

More COVID-19 Resources:

- Washington State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19) - Business & Workers
- Traveler's Health, CDC
- OSHA Guidance

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

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