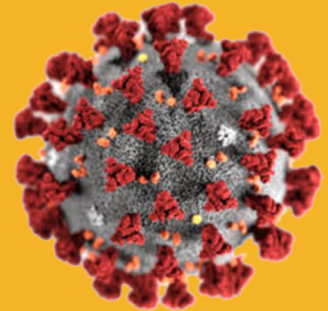# TEAMSTERS SAFETY & HEALTH
Coronavirus

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Summary and Resources

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. This fact sheet will be updated as needed. See links at the bottom of this page for the most up-to-date information.

Since December 2019, there has been an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and has now been detected in 60 locations internationally, including in several states within the United States. This disease has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

Globally, 73 countries have had over 92,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 that have resulted in over 3,000 deaths. More new cases are occurring outside China than in China.
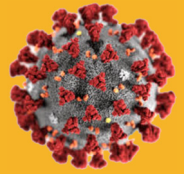
In the United States, currently 13 States have reported confirmed cases; there are Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. These and other States not listed here continue to test suspected cases and will report confirmed cases to local health departments and to the CDC.

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about the characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people, the severity of resulting illness, and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus (for example, vaccine or treatment medications).

WHAT IS COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

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.

WHY IS THE COVID-19 CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

- o It can kill healthy adults in addition to elderly people with existing health problems. According to the more recent statement form the World Health Organization (WHO), globally, about 3.4% of confirmed patients have died; this rate would make it many times more severe than typical seasonal influenza, putting it somewhere between the 1957 influenza pandemic (0.6%) and the 1918 influenza pandemic (2%).[2]
- o It is transmitted quite efficiently. The average infected person spreads the disease to two or three others. And,
- o Symptoms of COVID-19 appear within two to 14 days after exposure and there is strong evidence that it can be transmitted by people who are just mildly ill or even pre-symptomatic

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. However, this is a changing situation and there is ongoing research on the ways COVID-19 is spread.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily in the community ("community spread"). Infected patients have spread the virus to healthcare workers and may have to emergency responders as well.

PERSON-TO-PERSON SPREAD

A person would be contagious during the "incubation period," the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease- is up to 14 days. This estimate will be updated as more data become available.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from.
- o Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- o Respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
  - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- o People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- o Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

SPREAD FROM CONTACT WITH INFECTED SURFACES OR OBJECTS

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
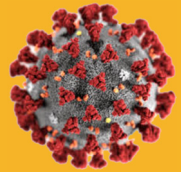
According to the CDC, "In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures."

WHICH WORKERS ARE AT INCREASED RISK?

Several workers employed at a long-term care facility as well as firefighters in Washington State and two health care workers in California have been either quarantined or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Working people are at increased risk if they frequently interact with potentially infected or infected individuals. Workers who are at increased risk include:

- o Health care workers;
- o Emergency responders (e.g., law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs);
- o Airline operations (e.g., pilots, flight attendants, other airport workers);
- o Other transportation operations;
- o Correctional workers;
- o Educators;
- o Cleaning workers;
- o Death workers;
- o Workers who have been identified as "essential personnel" by their employers during an outbreak or quarantine; and
- o Other workers with broad exposure to the public.

WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PROTECT WORKERS?

Measures for protecting workers from exposure to, and infection with, the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 depend on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with infectious people and contamination of the work environment. Employers should adopt infection control strategies based on a thorough hazard assessment, following the 'hierarchy of controls,' including using appropriate combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposures. Some OSHA standards that apply to prevent occupational exposure to COVID-19 also require employers to train workers on elements of infection prevention, including PPE.

For information on risks and protective measures in affected sectors, check the IBT website, and see links to OSHA, CDC and other federal and state agencies at the end of this fact sheet.
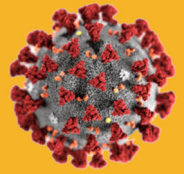
HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

- Comprehensive workplace plans to identify potential exposure routes, establish controls to mitigate risk and implement training procedures.
- Emphasis on personal hygiene practices, hand-washing, and respiratory etiquette.
- Adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, especially N95 respirators, and respirator fit testing.
- Protocols to clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.
- Protocols in case of a workplace or community outbreak, including possible self-quarantine or workplace quarantine.
- Plans for supply shortages, triage, prioritization, and other contingencies.
- Consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before hosting and attending events or large gatherings. CDC recommendations may change as the situation evolves.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

As a union, the rights and benefits we have fought for can help to prevent disease and help people who do become ill, including:
- Adequate, non-punitive sick leave policies that encourage sick workers to stay at home without the loss of pay, benefits, seniority or other benefits.
- Family leave policies that allow people to stay home to take care of household members.
- Financial remedies for unemployment scenarios, where people are not able to be at work or are required to work overtime to take care of patients.
- Access to quality and affordable health care.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Most patients (80%) experienced mild illness…approximately 14% experienced severe disease and 5% were critically ill."

Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

- The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough.
- Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea.
- These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.
- Around 1 out of every 6 people who get COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.
- Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment.
- Globally, 3.4% of people with the disease have died. The mortality rate is subject to change.
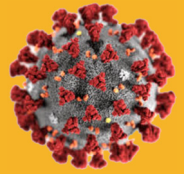
People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

IS THERE A VACCINE, DRUG, OR TREATMENT FOR COVID-19?

o To date, there is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-2019. Possible vaccines and some specific drug treatments to prevent and treat COVID-19 are under investigation.
o Those affected should receive care to relieve symptoms.
o Antibiotics do not work against COVID-19 because it is caused by a virus. They only work on bacterial infections.
o People with serious illnesses should be hospitalized. Most patients recover thanks to supportive care.

## WHAT IS THE CURRENT RISK STATUS OF COVID-19 IN THE UNITED STATES?

COVID-19 virus is NOT currently spreading widely in the United States. However, it is important to note that current global circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will cause a pandemic. This is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment will be updated as needed.

- For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered to be low.
- People in communities where community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated though still relatively low risk of exposure.
- Healthcare workers exposed to patients with COVID-19, whether they are providing care or cleaning, are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations with community spread are also at elevated risk of exposure.

WHAT IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR WITH COVID-19 IN THE US?

As person-to-person spread will continue to occur, more cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified globally, including more cases in the United States. It is likely that at some point, the widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur.

At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions are available.
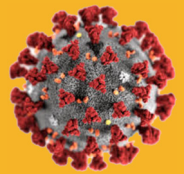
Widespread transmission of COVID-19 would translate into:
- o Large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time.
- o Schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings may experience more absenteeism.
- o Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths.
- o Other critical infrastructures, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and the transportation industry may also be affected.
- o Health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- ❖ IBT: teamster.org/covid-19
- ❖ U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html
https://newsroom.clevelandclinic.org/2020/03/02/frequently-asked-questions-about-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/
- ❖ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html
- ❖ Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
https://www.faa.gov/news/media/attachments/CDC%20FAA%20airline%20guidance.pdf
https://www.faa.gov/news/updates/?newsId=94991
- ❖ California OSHA: https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Coronavirus-info.html
- ❖ California Department of Public Health:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/AFL-20-09.pdf
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx
World Health Organization (WHO) https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200302-sitrep-42-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=edd4f123_2

TEAMSTERS
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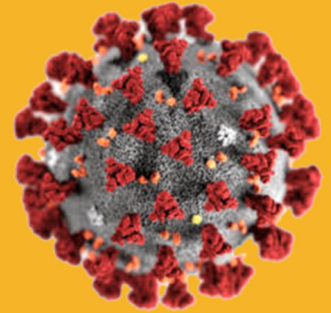
Information & Checklist
Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans 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 and SARS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in China and some limited person-to-person transmission has been reported in countries outside China, including the United States. However, respiratory illnesses like seasonal influenza, are currently widespread in many US communities.

Coronavirus

Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are viral respiratory illnesses caused by a coronavirus.

Severe symptoms

- High fever (100.4°F or higher)
- Pneumonia
- Kidney failure

Transmission

Coughs or sneezes from infected person or touching contaminated objects.

Common symptoms

- Fever
- A dry cough develops after 2 to 7 days
- Mild breathing difficulties at the outset
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Diarrhea
- General body aches

Transmission

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people.

Human-to-human transmission:

Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person by:

- Coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Fecal contamination.

Source: WHO, CDC, Getty Images
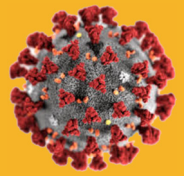
Please review this checklist to help take steps to plan and protect the health and safety of your staff and colleagues

Administration & Logistics

Yes/No

☐ ☐ Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning.

☐ ☐ Stay informed about the local flu situation and school closures.

☐ ☐ Put your plans, policies, and strategies into action, as needed.

☐ ☐ Update staff, customers, and suppliers with information about how your business is responding to the pandemic.

☐ ☐ Establish a process to communicate information to employees on your infectious disease outbreak response plans and latest COVID-19 information. Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.

☐ ☐ Are there flu-prevention supplies in your workplace (soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable facemasks)?

☐ ☐ Are their flexible pandemic flu attendance and sick-leave policies? Workers may need to stay home when they are sick, caring for a sick household member, or caring for their children in the event of school dismissals. **Identify critical job functions and positions**, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff (similar to planning for holiday staffing).

☐ ☐ Is there a method for monitoring and tracking flu-related worker absences? Understand your usual absenteeism patterns at each worksite.

☐ ☐ Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic, and improve services as needed.

☐ ☐ Can you identify space that can be used to separate sick people (if possible)? Designate a space for people who may become sick and cannot leave the workplace immediately. If possible, designate a nearby **separate bathroom just for sick people**. Develop a plan for cleaning the room daily.
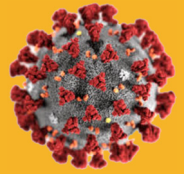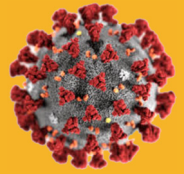
Yes/No

☐ ☐ Have you developed a risk-assessment and risk-management process for your workplace? Work closely with local public health officials to develop a contingency plan if assessing and managing risks among workers and those who come to your workplace is needed (for example, conducting health screenings for flu-like symptoms). *Note: Your Human Resources Manager may want to review the current Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to ensure workers will have access to needed emotional and mental health services during and after a pandemic.*

☐ ☐ Plan ways to continue essential services if on-site operations are reduced temporarily. Provide Web-and mobile-based communication and services, if possible. Increase the use of email, conference calls, video conferencing, and web-based seminars.

☐ ☐ Identify essential business functions, essential jobs or roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted.

☐ ☐ Develop platforms (e.g. hotlines, dedicated websites) for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way, including redundancies in the emergency contact system.

Worker Protections in the Workplace

Yes/No

☐ ☐ Do any employees who have symptoms of **acute respiratory illness recommended** to **stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer**), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at **least 24 hours**, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants)? Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

☐ ☐ Consistently practice social distancing. Plan ways to increase space between people to **at least 3 feet or limit face-to-face contact between** workers and those who come to the workplace. Several ways to do this include offering workers the option to **telework, creating reduced or staggered work schedules, spacing workers farther apart, and postponing non-essential meetings and travel**.

☐ ☐ Place reminders on **Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue** (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

Yes/No

☐ ☐ Place reminders on **Maintain hand hygiene**

☐ ☐ Place reminders on **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth**

☐ ☐ Clean surfaces frequently

Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

**Additional Measures in Response to Currently Occurring Sporadic Importations of the COVID-19:**

Yes/No

☐ ☐ Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

☐ ☐ If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

Travel Steps

Yes/No

☐ ☐ Review your process for **planning workplace events.** Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events.

☐ ☐ Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found at on the CDC website.
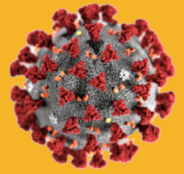
Yes/No

☐ ☐ Advise employees to **check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness** before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

☐ ☐ Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

☐ ☐ Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

☐ ☐ Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

References

1. Pandemic Flu Checklist: Workplace Administrators, CDC.

2. Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist, CDC.

3. Get Your Workplace Ready for Pandemic Flu, 2017. Atlanta, GA: Community Interventions for Infection Control Unit, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 2017.

4. Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), February 2020, CDC