



COVID-19: What Can Employers Do?

Review guidance from federal, state, local, tribal, and/or territorial health agencies, and consider how to incorporate those recommendations and resources into workplace-specific plans. As with any newly emerging infectious disease, knowledge evolves with time. The South Dakota Department of Health will continue to update the novel coronavirus outbreak website (covid.sd.gov) as more information becomes available.

Understand that the COVID-19 is not a short-term challenge, and operations will need to endure a difficult and limited social environment for potentially eight weeks or more. Innovate and continue to demonstrate entrepreneurial excellence in their operations during this difficult and uncertain environment.

PREPARATION + PREVENTION

What can I do to prepare for COVID-19 impacts to my workplace?

Identify and communicate objectives to your employees, including reducing transmission among staff, protecting people who are at higher risk for health complications, maintaining business operations, and/or minimizing effects on other entities in the supply chains. Some of the **key considerations** when making decisions include disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community and the impact of disease on employees that may be at higher risk for health complications.

Encourage staff to telework if possible and take the necessary steps to get them the tools they need to work remotely. Prepare for possible **increased numbers of absences**:

- Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so the workplace is able to operate.
- Assess your essential functions and the reliance of community members on your services or products.

Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their business infectious disease outbreak response plan based on the condition in each locality.

What can I do to prevent COVID-19 illnesses in my workplace?

- Ask employees reporting to work the following [screening questions](#) and keep a [daily screening log](#).
- Separate employees who become ill at work.
- Emphasize **respiratory etiquette** and hand hygiene by all employees:
 - Encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#).
 - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for employees.
 - Provide adequate supplies of alcohol-based hand rubs and sanitizer.
 - Visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.
- Perform **routine cleaning** of all frequently touched surfaces.
- For more strategies, refer to the [CDC website](#) for businesses.

When should I involve Human Resources or Employee Health?

- 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. Review the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) information.

- If an employee is confirmed to have the COVID-19 infection, 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.

FLEXIBILITIES + PROTECTIONS

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. 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.
- More employees may need to stay at home with children out of school or to care for sick loved ones. Ensure that **sick leave policies are flexible** and consistent with public health guidance, and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with **contract or temporary employees** about the importance of sick employees staying home.
- Limit unnecessary work gatherings.

OWNERS OF ENCLOSED PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENTS

In compliance with Governor Noem's Executive Order 2020-007, any bar, restaurant, brewery, cafe, casino, coffee shop, recreational or athletic facility, health club, or entertainment venue within the State of South Dakota should suspend or modify gatherings of ten or more people to be in an enclosed space where physical separation of at least six feet is not possible. Offer business models that do not involve public gatherings in an enclosed space.

Consider business arrangements and innovative ideas to support critical infrastructure sectors, as defined by the [Department of Homeland Security](#), as those employees have a special responsibility to maintain their normal work schedule. More frequently asked questions for employers regarding workplace safety can be found in the [COVID-19 Business Q&A](#). Specific information for business sectors includes:

- **Banks:** Continue to offer teller services. The SDBA has developed this page of resources regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) to help keep South Dakota banks informed as they plan and prepare at sdba.com/coronavirus. The South Dakota Division of Banking also issued a [pandemic memo on March 12, 2020](#).
- **Food and Beverage:** Offer or continue to offer takeout, delivery, drive-through, curbside service, off-sale services or other innovative business models that do not involve public gatherings. More information is available at restaurant.org/Covid19.
- **Retailers:** Information on protecting your business can be found on the South Dakota Retailers Association website at sdra.org/protection.html.

LABOR LAWS

Be aware of workers' concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues that may arise during infectious disease outbreaks, and ensure managers are abreast of current information. Resources for employers regarding Workers' Compensation, the Family Medical Leave Act, and other labor laws can be found at the Department of Labor and Regulation website at: dlr.sd.gov/covid_19_resources.aspx.

LAYOFFS + ASSISTANCE

- A temporary layoff related to COVID-19 may result in eligibility for unemployment benefits. To view possible eligibility scenarios, visit dlr.sd.gov/ra/covid_19_ra_eligibility.aspx.
- Questions should be emailed to DLRRADivision@state.sd.us to receive a direct and timely response. Please leave the phone lines open for claimants if possible.
- [Sign up for the State Information Data Exchange System \(SIDES\) e-Response](#) to receive all notices by email rather than by postal mail.

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Should staff delay or suspend travel to affected areas?

Limit non-essential travel. Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which employees may travel. This can be found on the [CDC website](#).

SYMPTOMS + PRECAUTIONS

What should I do if I suspect a staff member is at risk for COVID-19?

If a staff member or subcontracted individual is ill with a fever or cough, or has difficulty breathing, it is important to place them in a private room away from others as soon as possible and instruct them to go home.

Use the [What should I Do? Infographic](#) to help guide your decisions.

Call 1.800.592.1861 to receive up-to-date guidance.

OTHER INFORMATION

Where can I turn for more information?

- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#), (OSHA)
- [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2020](#), South Dakota Department of Health