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COVID-19 Information for Businesses

About COVID-19:

Signs and Symptoms: People who have confirmed COVID-19 infections have a range of symptoms, from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely sick and dying. Symptoms can include:

- Fever (100.4 F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Onset of Symptoms: may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Sick Employees:

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home except to get medical care, as needed.

- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.

Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home for self-quarantine. Learn what to do if you are sick.

- Employees who are well but have a family member at home who is sick with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor that they will not be attending work and quarantine themselves and any other household close contacts. Family medical leave or other legal contracts may apply. Learn what to do if someone in your house is sick.

- Individuals who are asymptomatic and have no knowledge of being exposed to someone with COVID-19 can attend work unless they have a possible travel exposure.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee will be isolated for at least 7 days or 72 hours after symptoms are greatly improved, whichever is longer. The health department will work with the employee to determine when the employee can be released from isolation and return to work. Those who were in "close contact" – meaning those who were within 6 feet of this person for more than 10 minutes at a time the last 2 days prior to the positive employee becoming ill will be quarantined for 14 days from the last day they were in contact with the positive employee. The health department will determine who those employees are. As always, all other employees should continue to self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough or shortness of breath). If is important to maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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If an employee appears sick but the symptoms are not consistent with COVID-19 symptoms, their illness should be treated as any other flu like illness situation – send them home until they are well for 24 hours without the use of medication before retuning to work.

Note: Public health officials will only contact employers about an employee's positive case if there is a concern about compliance with isolation requirements or if assistance is needed to help identify and reach any close contacts to the positive case. Close contacts are anyone who has been within 6 feet to the positive case for longer than 10 minutes. Due to HIPPA requirements, public health does not routinely contact employers when the risk to other employees or others is considered low.

Travel:

People who are returning to Wisconsin from any international travel, cruise ship, or a US state with community transmission should complete a 14-day voluntary self-quarantine. **Check the CDC website for All US states with community transmission. All non-essential travel outside of the Chippewa Valley region is not recommended.**

Advise employees before traveling to take additional preparations: Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) 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 promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

Any travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Special Situations, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Businesses and Operations, or Minimum Basic Operations. (these are highlighted in the order if you want to copy and paste what you think is pertinent for them. (order)

When employees can discontinue home isolation or self-quarantine?

Discontinuation of isolation can occur without the need for follow-up COVID-19 testing ("test-of-cure") if the following conditions are met:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers) **AND**

- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) **AND**

- at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

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Testing:

Testing is not recommended for individuals who do not have symptoms.

Tests can be done in Eau Claire County, however healthcare providers are not testing everyone who is ill since testing supplies are low. If employees would not have otherwise sought medical care for their symptoms, they should stay home and follow the guidelines in the "sick employee" section.

If their symptoms are too severe to be managed at home or they have a medical emergency, call 911 or call ahead to the emergency department to notify them that you may have COVID-19 so that the emergency staff can take the appropriate precautions.

How can I slow or stop the spread of COVID-19 in my workplace?

Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors:

- Place posters at the entrance to your workplace and in other areas where they are likely to be seen reminding employees to stay home when sick, practice cough and sneeze etiquette, and perform hand hygiene. CDC has posters with messages for staff about [staying home when sick](#) and how to [avoid spreading germs](#).

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees and customers

- Instruct employees to [clean their hands often](#) with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Place posters in restrooms with instructions for employees on how to wash their hands with soap and water and how to exit the restroom without contaminating their hands.

- Advise employees to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace to encourage hand hygiene. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.

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

- Advise employees to avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.

- Whenever possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.

Perform routine environmental cleaning:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. See the [CDC COVID-19 Disinfection Guidance](#).

  o If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

  o For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is

available [here](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

- If an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has visited your workplace, more stringent [environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols](#) should be followed.

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

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.

- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.

- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive "emergency sick leave" policies.

- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.

- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the [Department of Labor](#) and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's](#) websites).

- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the death of a loved one.

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).

- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some good and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.

- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.

- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

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Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from childcare programs and K-12 schools.

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.

- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.

- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.

- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Consider establishing policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing should be implemented if recommended by state and local health authorities. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework)

- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)

- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite

- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)

- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)

- Downsizing operations

- Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)

- Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase ventilation rates.

- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Take care when attending meetings and gatherings:

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary.

- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.

- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.

- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

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Additional Resources and Information:

OHSA Guidance on Occupational Risk for Workplaces to help prepare for COVID-19: When making plans, employers should consider levels of occupational risk, local disease severity, and the potential impact of disease on vulnerable employees and customers. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration has developed guidance to help assess occupational risk and lists a number of examples to help workplaces prepare for COVID-19.

US Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans: Under the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, businesses and non-profits may qualify for up to $2 million in loans to cover losses resulting from the pandemic. The interest rate on the loans is 3.75% for for-profit businesses and 2.75% for nonprofits. Participants may be able to extend payments for up to 30 years.

- Businesses and non-profits can begin their loan applications at www.sba.gov/disaster. The Wisconsin Small Business Development (SBDC) Network and it partners are helping small businesses apply for federal disaster loans to mitigate the substantial economic injury as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Wisconsin SBDC, a resource partner of the SBA, has created a web page to help business owners understand the qualifications and application process. That web page is available here. Consultants across the network's 13 locations are working remotely via phone, email and virtual tools to assist clients.
- **Additional business resources** can be found on Wisconsin SBDC's website https://wisconsinsbdc.org/covid-19/ and Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship's website, www.business.wisconsin.edu/covid-19. The UW System is sharing updates regularly at www.wisconsin.edu/coronavirus.
- **For more information, consult the FAQ sheet** from SBA here, visit the SBA website at sba.gov, or visit the SBDC website at www.wisconsinsbdc.org/disasterloans.

Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce Website: https://www.eauclairechamber.org/covid-19-information.html.