Employers should take action to **implement strategies that will protect their workforce** from the coronavirus while **ensuring continuity of operations**.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidance states that employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower impact in the workplace. This may include **certain activities to reduce transmission among employees, maintain healthy business operations, and maintain a healthy work environment**.

It is recommended that **sick employees stay home, away from the workplace, use cough and sneeze etiquette, frequently clean hands, and routinely clean commonly touch surfaces**.
In advance of employees getting sick

**Determine whether flex work is an option**
- Review HR policies and explore whether you can establish practices to support telecommuting and flexible work hours
- Supervisors should educate employees to telework if they become sick

**Create an employee communications plan**
- Establish a process to communicate coronavirus information to employees and business partners
- Plan communications to anticipate employee fear, anxiety, and misinformation

**Make a business continuity plan**
- Be prepared to change business practices to maintain critical operations
- This could include identifying alternate suppliers, prioritizing customers, considering digital meetings, or temporary suspension of some operations

**Coordinate with public health officials**
- Coordinate with state and local health officials so that accurate information can guide appropriate responses in different operations locations
- Contact local public health departments to learn about community plans in place in each business location

**Decide how to handle high absenteeism**
- Dismissal of early childhood programs and K-12 schools could impact employee absenteeism
- Determine how an absenteeism spike due to sick employees, employees caring for sick family members, and employees who must watch children will impact operations
When employees become sick

Ensure flexible sick leave policies
- Encourage sick employees to stay home and notify their supervisor if they will not be coming into the office
- Permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member and ensure employees are aware of sick leave policies

Local decision making
- Employers with more than one location are encouraged to empower local managers to take appropriate action based on conditions in each locality

Employee travel
- Ensure that employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment notify their supervisor and call a healthcare provider, if necessary

Separate sick employees
- CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) should be separated from other employees and sent home immediately

Social distancing
- Plan to minimize exposure between health employees and those employees and the public
- Listen to public health officials calling for social distancing

Workplace hygiene
- Clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace
- Provide disposable wipes so that employees can wipe down surfaces before use
Additional measures in response to the coronavirus

**CDC Guidance**
- As of March 16th, CDC recommends that in-person US events with 10 people or more should be canceled, postponed or held virtually
- CDC has also released [updated travel warnings](#) for many countries

**OSHA requirements**
- There is currently no Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard covering the coronavirus
- Some OSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupation exposure to the coronavirus and OSHA has released information on how to protect workers from potential coronavirus exposure

**Outside the United States**
- Sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care, contacting a health care provider, or contacting an overseas medical assistance company for assistance with finding a health care provider
- A US consular officer can help locate health care services; however, US embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have legal authority, capability, or resources to give medical care to private US citizens overseas
- Employees may be limited by travel restrictions enacted by other countries

**Health confidentiality**
- If an employee is confirmed to have the coronavirus infection, employers should inform employees of possible exposure to coronavirus while still maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Employees exposed to a coworker with confirmed coronavirus should refer to [CDC guidance](#) for risk exposure assessment