



Date: March 16, 2020

To: All Businesses and Employers

From: Maggie Park, M.D., Interim Health Officer

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San Joaquin County Guidance for Employers

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Background

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus that has been spreading worldwide. Community-acquired cases have now been confirmed in California and as of March 16, 2020 there are nine (9) confirmed case in San Joaquin County. Businesses and employers should prepare for possible impacts of COVID-19 and take precautions to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Mitigation

Mitigation procedures are intended to slow the transmission of a disease and protect the most vulnerable in our community as well as the healthcare and critical infrastructure workforces.

EMPLOYERS should:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Provide disinfectant wipes so that frequently used surfaces (i.e., doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, handrails) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the workplace.
 - Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
 - Place hand sanitizer in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage staying home sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning.
- Use telephone or video conferencing whenever possible, especially for those that are at increased risk of severe illness.
- Decrease in-person contact at the workplace.
 - Increase physical space between workers at the worksite.
 - Stagger work schedules.
 - Limit large work-related gatherings.



- See the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) updated full guidance on Mass Gatherings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>
- Limit or cancel non-essential work-travel.
- Actively encourage sick workers to stay home.
 - Do not require a healthcare provider's note for workers who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare providers office and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
 - Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that workers are aware of these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit workers 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 family members than is usual.
- Do not make determinations of COVID-19 risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19.

WORKERS should:

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between people, when possible.
- Use "respiratory etiquette" - cover cough with a tissue or sleeve, not hands.
- Avoid shaking hands and hugging.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - If hands are visibly dirty, then soap and water should be used instead of hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch face with unwashed hands.
- Regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces (see Environmental Cleaning section below).

FYI: Face masks are not recommended for healthy people for prevention purposes. Face masks are most useful in limiting the spread of disease when they are worn by people who already have symptoms.

Worker Illness

- If an employee comes to work sick or becomes sick with fever OR respiratory symptoms OR sore throat during the workday, they must be sent home immediately.
 - The individual should call their primary care physician (PCP) as soon as possible.
- Anyone that is symptomatic or mildly ill should stay home for at least seven (7) days after the symptoms begin AND 3 days after symptoms stop.



- See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) full guidance on What to Do If You Are Sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
- If someone is in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and is asymptomatic then they should be allowed to work.
 - They should also self-monitor for fever, respiratory symptoms, or sore throat.
 - Public Health Services is not testing these individuals at this time.

Environmental Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, keyboards, phones) with household cleaners and EPA-Registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfections should be effective.
 - Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water OR
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - List of EPA-approved Products: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - If the items can be laundered, launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry completely
 - Otherwise, use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims (see link above) that are suitable for porous surfaces.



- Full CDC guidance on Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM21539

Planning Considerations

- Impact of disease on workers that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for COVID-19 adverse health complications.
 - Inform workers that some people may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Prepare for possible increased number of worker absences due to illness in workers and their family members, dismissals of early childhood programs and K-12 schools due to high levels of absenteeism or illness.
 - Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions.
- 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 local conditions.
- Visit Occupational Safety and Health Act's (OSHA) Guide on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Stay Informed

1. Full CDC Guidance for Businesses and Employers (2/26/2020): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
2. San Joaquin County Public Health Services: <http://www.sjcphs.org/>
3. California Department of Public Health (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Resources

1. CDC's What To Do If You Are Sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>
2. California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) for specific guidance and program assistance: <https://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/>
3. CDC's Stop the Spread of Germs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>
4. CDC Handwashing Fact Sheets (Eng/Span): <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>