

**With the coronavirus in the headlines, what is your company doing to educate your employees, as well as providing safety measures for the employees at work?**

**Do you have a pandemic plan? What is being done currently?**

**Have you discussed how you are going to handle employees who show symptoms of or have been diagnosed with the flu but have run out of sick or PTO time?**

**Our management team got together this morning to discuss how we are going to handle this, but I would like to know what, if anything, the other members are doing. Any additional information will be greatly appreciated.**

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We've had a meeting with everyone to stress the importance of washing hands and sanitizing their workstations as well as common areas. We also talked about noticing early signs of the flu and going to the doctor right away.

I think the best thing to do if employees are showing signs of the flu, is to get them out of the workplace. If they are out of PTO time, cover them. It will cost the company way more money if they spread the flu to others.

We don't have a pandemic plan, but I have highly stressed not coming to work with any symptoms and they will not be punished for it. I think that will hopefully prevent a companywide pandemic.

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Our company stresses frequent hand cleaning, available hand sanitizer already

Concerns

- increasing frequency of cleaning frequently touched surfaces (handles, computers, lunch room appliances) with Clorox wipes
  - ability to order dust masks, used in some manufacturing
  - our vendors use raw materials from China, possible component shortage to us
  - if employee is sick, we would want them to stay home - if ran out of vacation time, would still pay their salary
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With the coronavirus in the headlines, what is your company doing to educate your employees, as well as providing safety measures for the employees at work? At this time nothing more than what we have in the past with signs asking people to wash their hands.

Do you have a pandemic plan? No. What is being done currently? Nothing at this time.

Have you discussed how you are going to handle employees who show symptoms of or have been diagnosed with the flu but have run out of sick or PTO time? Not in the form of a meeting. But we need to, as we have some people who come in sick and refuse to wear masks. We have other employees saying if the sick people will not wear the masks or be sent home. Then they will walk off the job. This has been an ongoing problem for us as we seem to have the same people being sick over and over and spreading it to the rest of us. With the new virus thing some people are becoming more worried.

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Check the CDC website as they have good recommendations and posters currently for when employees are sick how to handle it. Here is an example (*editor's note: see page 6*)

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Sorry, but we have not discussed, at all, at this point, so I would love ideas.

The only little things we have in play are hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes available throughout the building. But I suppose it is time to minimally post signage regarding symptoms to watch out for, etc. I will check CDC's website to see what type of material they might have available.

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We do not have a pandemic plan but have always encouraged our employees to use good judgement in whether they should come to work if not feeling well and displaying symptoms that could make them contagious (fever, sneezing, coughing). We have also encouraged people to leave if they are clearly that ill, as they really can't contribute effectively. Our attendance policy has some flexibility built in to avoid incurring repeated points when there is a related reason for their absence or for consecutive days of absence.

There are currently no provisions to provide additional paid time off if their bank has been exhausted.

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We have asked our cleaning crew to add disinfecting all door handles, door knobs and counter tops nightly with a strong disinfectant. We are encouraging employees to stay home when sick and to wash their hands often. As more information becomes available, we will share with employees and make changes if and when necessary.

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Answers:

1. Nothing
  2. No
  3. No, there is no sick time off only PTO, it has not been discussed.
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We have written procedures regarding closing the company. Employees will work from home, if possible. Agreements have been established with friendly competitors to cover our press, bindery and mail production, if necessary.

Every day we ask all employees in every area of the plant to use disinfectant wipes (Clorox) to wipe down their areas at noon. Conference rooms, bathrooms, lunchroom, keyboards, mouse's, phones, doorknobs, etc., are all covered. Only takes 3 – 4 minutes.

Employees with fevers or coughs have been asked to stay home. Most all of our employees have been cross trained so we can still get out orders in a timely basis.

We have given employees advanced notice that due to [major airport] being relatively close we may have to stop production for a week or so. Our SLA agreements with clients require notification of delivery delays.

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*Editor's note: this PIA brief was prepared on February 28, 2020. According to the CDC website on March 6, 2020, the number of confirmed cases is now 164, with 36 of those travel related and 18 person-to-person spread.*

The coronavirus has most companies concerned about the impact it will have on absenteeism and supply chain. While it is true that the coronavirus is spreading, importantly there are almost extremely few cases in the United States right now. Of the 326 million people living in the United States, only **14** [confirmed cases](#) of people being diagnosed in the U.S. with coronavirus, and only **2** of them were not related to travel by that person or their domestic partner. While the coronavirus is new and much is not known, here is what experts from the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control, and other experts have learned:

- The virus is moderately infectious, mainly through sneezing and coughing, but possibly also contact with surfaces that have been contaminated with sneezes and coughs.
- More than 80% of the confirmed coronavirus cases are not severe and people generally make a full recovery.
- The mild cases may resemble having the common cold. The ones that are worse mostly resemble having the flu.

A greater threat to absenteeism is the flu and influenza-like illnesses (ILI), which have stormed through the United States this year, with [43 states reporting high activity](#) right now, with more than 140,000 new cases *each week* so far this year.

The same behaviors used to ward off the flu can ward off the coronavirus:

- Frequent hand washing – particularly after touching items used by many people (i.e.: handles on drawers, refrigerators, etc.)
- Don't touch your face – this will keep the virus away from your mouth and nose, because we can't be washing our hands all day every day.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Wear a mask if you believe you are sick or are around sick people, if masks are available.
- Use antibacterial wipes to clean counters and tables in common areas every day.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow to cover any "spray".
- Every time you cough or sneeze, wash your hands immediately for at least 20 seconds.
- If you can get masks, then distribute them to employees who request them.
- Throw tissues away in lined trash cans.

If employees have run out of paid sick time, follow the same protocols that your company has always used if an employee has used up their PTO. Similarly, if an employee does have a long-term illness that requires extended leave, follow the standard Family & Medical Leave Act policies. The reality is that the coronavirus is not currently an absenteeism threat to United States companies. At this time, there is no reason to close the company or otherwise take dramatic action.

Companies may experience supply chain issues due to slow delivery of materials or parts from China, primarily, and some European countries as well. Unless domestic suppliers can be found, the supply chain issue has no immediate solution. However, the spread of the disease within China is slowing, and manufacturing facilities hope to be back to normal within three weeks barring a worsening of the spread of the coronavirus.

Read only trusted sources for actual facts, such as the [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#). We will also keep the [HR page on printing.org](#) updated.

*Editor's note: here are links to additional resources:*

- Printing Industries of America is referring members to informational websites by OSHA, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. The links are here:  
<https://www.printing.org/programs/human-resources>
- CDC's About Coronavirus webpage:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
- The CDC has a very helpful page for businesses with recommendations for creating an outbreak response plan:  
[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), February 2020](#)
- The CDC also has a Print Resources webpage with downloadable fact sheets and posters: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- Our HR partner, MRA, has a sample employee memo (see page 7).
- Lastly, there is good advice now making the rounds about preparing your supply chain.  
<https://hbr.org/2020/02/prepare-your-supply-chain-for-coronavirus>



# Feeling sick?

Stop the spread of flu in the workplace.  
**Stay home when you are sick.**

Common Flu Signs & Symptoms Include:



**Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills**

\*It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.



**Sore throat**



**Runny or stuffy nose**



**Cough**



**Muscle or body aches**



**Headaches**



**Fatigue (tiredness)**

*Flu is different from a common cold.*

*Flu usually comes on suddenly, and in general symptoms are more intense.*

**If you think you may have flu tell your supervisor and stay home from work.**

**All employees should stay home if they are sick.** CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) is gone. Your fever should be gone without the need to use a fever-reducing medicine.



## Communication Memo to Employees on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**NOTE TO EMPLOYER:** *This sample communication memo is intended to be modified to fit your organization's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19).*

Our top priority is focused on the health and safety of our employees. XYZ Company is committed to protecting the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. We understand concerns about Coronavirus (COVID-19) are top of mind, and we want to share information about how we are responding.

### What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It's a respiratory illness and is related to MERS and SARS, both coronaviruses. Like other coronaviruses, it has come from animals. Many of those infected either worked or frequently shopped in the Huanan seafood wholesale market in the center of the Chinese city, which also sold live and newly slaughtered animals. Ebola and flu are other examples.

### Symptoms and Prevention Methods

While the spread of the virus outside China is worrying, it's not an unexpected development. However, it is a good reminder for us to pay attention to how we are feeling and how to prevent spreading germs. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Hand-washing and avoiding other people if you feel unwell are important. One sensible step is to get the flu vaccine, which will reduce the burden on health services if the outbreak turns into a wider epidemic.

Employees are always encouraged to engage in good hygiene practices while at work, especially hand washing with soap and water or, if water is not available, using alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.

### Current Actions

We have posted signs as reminders to wash hands and cover your cough. In addition, we have made our hand sanitizer dispensers and disinfectant materials available for use through the facility by our employees, suppliers, and customers.

Due to travel restrictions, all international business travel has been suspended. Employees who have recently traveled to China on personal vacations have been cleared to return to work and pose no risk to the health of other employees.

In the event an employee displays symptoms of illness related to the coronavirus or is subject to a quarantine directive, XYZ Company may allow remote working options or may provide additional paid time off to ensure no significant risk exists.

Ultimately, we encourage everyone to make responsible decisions and stay home if they are sick. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Human Resources department.

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