Global Cold Chain Alliance: COVID-19 Rapid Response Guide

Version 5.0
Updated March 30, 2020

GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ALLIANCE®

Document Updates

The following list provides an update of what has been added or edited to this version of the document recently.

<u>Updates to Version 5</u> (posted March 30, 2020)

Edited

> *[Background](#)*
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> *[How do we ensure the safety of the food and our employees?](#)*
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> *[Who should we contact if one of my employees is suspected of having COVID-19?](#)*
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> *[What protocols are recommended for the food industry when an employee/customer tests positive for COVID-19?](#)*

Added

> *[What are cold storage operators doing to help mitigate risk of spreading COVID-19?](#)*
>
> *[Where can we source hand sanitizer for our facility?](#)*
>
> *[Printable and Shareable Resources?](#)*

Removed

> *How is the virus spread?*
>
> *Can someone spread the virus without being sick?*
>
> *What are the symptoms of COVID-19?*
>
> *What can individuals do to protect others in the workplace?*
>
> *Appendices*

Updates to Version 4 (posted March 23, 2020)

Edited

> *United States Regulations for Questioning USDA Employees*

Added

> *Where can we find a COVID-19 Testing Site?*
>
> *What protocols are recommended for the food industry when an employee/customer tests positive for COVID- 19?*
>
> *Food Industry Recommended Protocols When Employee/Customer Tests Positive for COVID- 19*
>
> *Printable ID for Essential Critical Workers (Canada)*

Updates to Version 3 (posted on March 20, 2020)

Edited

> *What are other cold storage operators doing to help mitigate risk of spreading COVID-19?*
>
> *Can employers take temperatures of employees as they come into work?*

Added

> *During shelter in place orders, are food supply worker considered essential critical infrastructure?*
>
> *How do our employees prove they are essential critical infrastructure?*
>
> *How do we keep our employees healthy given they may be working additional hours?*
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> *How can we help reduce employee's fear of coming to work?*
>
> *Printable US ID for Essential Critical Workers*
>
> *Memo for Identification of Essential Critical Workers*
>
> *Employee FAQ for COVID-19*

Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by the staff of the Global Cold Chain Alliance.

Document Purpose30

This document is to serve as a "Rapid Response Guide" for GCCA members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The contents of this document are a collection of information shared by reputable government agencies and scientific institutions, compiled by GCCA. While **this document will be updated often**, local, state, provincial and federal mandates should always take precedence over the contents of this document. For the safety and wellbeing of employees and customers, we encourage our members to maintain open lines of communication with public health agencies in your area.

This guide attempts to answer common questions that may arise during each of the following five stages of intervention:

1. Background
2. Planning
3. Responding
4. Recovering
5. Resources

Selecting an item in the Table of Contents will redirect you to that section of the guide. This document has been formatted in manner that will allow you to copy or send individual pages to your team. Feel free to disseminate the information in whichever manner you deem appropriate.

GCCA welcomes you to participate in conversations and ask any questions in our Community Forum at http://community.gcca.org/home.

About the Global Cold Chain Alliance

Comprised of its Core Partners, including the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses (IARW), the World Food Logistics Organization (WFLO), the International Refrigerated Transportation Association (IRTA), and the Controlled Environment Building Association (CEBA), the Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) represents all major industries engaged in temperature-controlled logistics. GCCA unites partners to facilitate communication, networking, and education for the perishable food industry. For more information about GCCA, visit www.gcca.org.

Vision

The Global Cold Chain Alliance will be the recognized authority in forging a universally strong cold chain where every product retains quality and safety through each link.

Mission

The Global Cold Chain Alliance unites partners to be innovative leaders in the temperature-controlled products industry.

More information on GCCA and all its Core Partners can be found at www.gcca.org.

About the GCCA Scientific Advisory Council

From legal issues to food storage questions, GCCA and its team of experts on the WFLO Scientific Advisory Council can help you with your cold chain questions through the GCCA Inquiry Service

The WFLO Scientific Advisory Council is an eminent group of food scientists, logistics, and packaging experts from around the world. The council provides cutting-edge research and advice to members of the Global Cold Chain Alliance and its Core Partners.

Want to ask the Scientific Advisory Council a question? Submit an inquiry today. The inquiry service is a member-only service.

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Background

During these unprecedented times, there is no shortage of information available to the general public regarding novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Not all information found online is reputable, therefore the Global Cold Chain Alliance recommends that you refer to information published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for best practices regarding spread, symptoms and prevention. While these sources will provide guidance for the general public, the remainder of this guide will provide guidance for the temperature-controlled supply chain.

Planning

What can our organization do to protect people working and entering our workplace?

1. **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.**

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

   o 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.

   o Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

2. **Separate sick employees**

   o CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately.

3. **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees**

   o Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.

   o Provide soap and water, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.

4. **Perform routine environmental cleaning particularly for frequently touched surfaces daily**.

   o No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time
      - [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
      - [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
      - [Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)-Fighting Products](#) (PDF)

5. **Advise employees before traveling** to check the CDC's traveler's health notices and not travel if they have symptoms of acute respiratory illness.

Source: [CDC - How to Protect Yourself](#), [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) updated 3/17/2020

How do we ensure the safety of the food and our employees?

United States

The **U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA)** released its first set of guidelines on March 17, 2020 outlining specific recommendations for *Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)* and continues to issue regular updates.

The full set of questions, answers and resources can be found here: [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).](#)

On March 20, 2020 the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** released updated guidance on COVID-19 Health USDA Employee Questionnaires. Here is an excerpt from the full statement:

COVID-19 remains a fluid situation, and thus, USDA will continue to monitor and implement Federal government and applicable public health authorities' guidance and may revise the following accordingly.

During this pandemic, industry employees may orally ask USDA employees questions concerning COVID-19 prior to allowing entrance into the facility. **USDA permits industry to orally ask the following**:

1. If the USDA employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including shortness of breath, body aches, coughing, and fever of over 100.4.

2. If someone living in the USDA employee's household or someone the USDA employee is caring for has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had any recent contact with a confirmed case ofCOVID-19.

3. In the last 14 days, if the USDA employee, someone living in the USDA employee's household, or someone with whom the USDA employee has been in close or frequent contact with, or someone the USDA employee is caring for, returned from, or made a travel connection through a CDC Level 3 or Level 2 country or State Department Level 3 or Level 4 country, for example, China, Korea, Japan, the European Union, Iran.

4. Industry may also measure a USDA employee's temperature via a digital forehead thermometer before permitting entry into the facility.

USDA employees will **only respond to questions orally and will not sign** any attestations or submit any written questionnaires.

The **industry has the authority to determine whether to permit or deny entry into its facility** should a USDA employee answer in the affirmative to any of the above questions. The industry may retain a record of USDA employees that are both permitted

or denied entrance. However, the industry **may not retain any confidential or medical information** associated with any USDA employee's response.

We thank you for your continued commitment to protecting the health and safety of all our employees during this difficult time.

Source: Letter to FSIS-Regulated Establishment Facility Management from USDA FSIS Office of Field Operations, updated 3/20/2020

Canada

The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)** is working diligently to address the challenges and concerns raised by industry and consumers regarding COVID-19. The agency will adjust activities to take into account the evolving situation. The CFIA will continue to collaborate and communicate regularly with regulated parties, federal, provincial and territorial colleagues and stakeholders while posting updates on it's website.

Effective March 23, 2020, CFIA is prioritizing some services while temporarily suspending non-essential activities. An official statement can be found online. Additionally, the agency continues to offer guidance on current measures regarding entry of inspectors into facilities with the most recent update being issued on March 24, 2020.

What are cold storage operators doing to help mitigate risk of spreading COVID-19?

Please note that these are community source practices and not official recommendations to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

- **Disinfect equipment and frequently touched surfaces before shifts begin and after shifts are complete.** "High touch" surfaces include Material Handling Equipment (MHE)/forklifts, tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, control panels, computer screens and monitors. See this list of *EPA-approved disinfectants*.

- **Disinfect PPE with EPA-approved disinfectant spray.** Freezer gear including freezer jackets, gloves, and hats can be sprayed with disinfectant spray before and after shifts are complete. See this list of *EPA-approved disinfectants*. One practice is to use a 5% bleach solution sprayed on freezer gear and hang out to air dry.

- **Bleach solutions that facilities can make for sanitation.**
  - 1/2 teaspoon (2.45ml) of bleach to 1 gallon (3.8 liters) of water will make a 50ppm solution for hand dips.
  - 1 Tablespoon (14.8 ml) of bleach to 1 gallon (3.8 liters) of water will make a 200ppm solution for sanitizing surfaces after washing them down.

Guidelines provided by the WFLO Scientific Advisory Council – for questions submit an inquiry.

- **Limit or prohibit visitors, including drivers, from entering the facility**. Rent external bathroom trailers to provide drivers with private bathroom facilities. Ensure these are cleaned and disinfected as often as permanent bathrooms in the facility.

- **Limit driver contact with staff.** If you do have drivers interacting with office staff, ask drivers to **use hand sanitizer** before handing off paperwork or other points of physical contact. Alternatively provide sinks for drivers to wash their hands before they come into the shipping/receiving office.

- **Going paperless with drivers.** Drivers scan paperwork – one scanner if you're picking up a load and one scanner if you're dropping off a load. Then, that paperwork goes to the appropriate contact within the warehouse to print for the physical Bill of Lading. Create a video to help drivers understand the new process.

- **Supply lunches for all drivers.** To help make drivers feel that they are a valued and critical part of the team, allow each driver to enter the facility one at a time and take a bagged lunch provided by a catering company. Do anything we can to ensure drivers still want to come to our buildings.

- **Provide individually wrapped boxed lunches as much as possible**. This reduces the need for employees to go off-campus, limiting potential opportunities for exposure. It also provides an opportunity to support local food retailers who may be suffering from reduced business.

- **Request food trucks**. Reach out to local food trucks and request that they come to your facility given the constant stream of employees and drivers on-site. Reduces employees from having to go off-campus while still supporting local business.

- **Keep senior management physically separate** from each other for business continuity purposes. Members have reported conducting daily management briefings via video teleconferencing.

- **Designate space for on-site childcare** given school and daycare closures, reducing the need for working parents to take a leave of absence *(Note: This suggestion came from our European members. We recommend consulting with legal counsel regarding local, state and federal childcare laws.)*

- **Limit team member movement** by asking management not to visit multiple sites; instead to stay at one specific site or facility.

- **Stagger shift start/end times** to reduce communal traffic at entry points and in locker rooms. In construction stage work shifts to reduce contact between construction workers.

- **Install portable sinks.** Rent or purchase portable sinks to install on construction sites for workers. Ask plumbers if they have extra utility sinks and temporarily install them on the construction sites.

- **Permit employees to carry a negative balance in their sick time.** Show your teams that you care and will work with them through this challenging time, while also mitigating the risk of exposure to other employees.

- **Perfect attendance raffle**. At the end of the work week, have a drawing for a gift or prize for those employees who worked all of their shifts.

- **Increasing hourly pay based on perfect attendance for the week.** Could be listed as pandemic pay ($2 per hour bonus) and appear as a separate pay

bucket in payroll so it is not confused with regular earnings. Given if worker completes their normally scheduled weekly shifts.

- **Shift supervisor bonus.** Since some supervisors are working extra shifts or an extra day of the week (Sat), give them an additional bonus for that extra day worked above normal pay.

- **Compensating at-home workers.** For employees now working from home, giving them an additional payment per month to offset costs due to increased phone bill, faster internet speeds, purchasing home office supplies, etc.

- **Communicating the company's commitment to a safe workplace.** Send out regular and frequent communications via email to all employees that outline specific actions the company is taking to ensure worker safety. These communications may include information such as frequency of cleaning, social distancing practices, policies for drivers, business updates, etc. to help workers feel comfortable and confident in continuing to come to work.

- **Embrace designation as "Essential/Critical Infrastructure".** Create t-shirts with the slogan "I'm essential", hang posters around the facility to create a mentality around how important our roles are during the pandemic.

- **Start a Facebook group for all workers**. Allows a place for workers and more importantly their families to connect during this time. It promotes togetherness and, given the extra time at home with family, is a place to share favorite online activities, education resources, and help resources. You can also promote photo sharing of creative activities for the entire family.

- **Targeted ads for hiring**. Start to become more aggressive on recruiting to get ahead of any potential labor shortages by using targeted Facebook and Instagram ads.

Additional measures to be added as members share how they are responding. Visit the *http://community.gcca.org/home* to participate in the conversation.

Source: GCCA member forum updated 3/30/2020

Can employers take temperatures of employees as they come into work?

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines that allows employers to measure body temperatures in the United States can be found _here_. Even though the EEOC released this guidance, it is still a medical examination. It is recommended that examiners be trained on how to safely gather and record the information. We recommend having an HR manager or safety person doing that screening and having them go through additional training.

Source: EEOC – What You Should Know About the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and COVID-19 updated 3/20/2020

The general answer is it is probably okay. There is some risk (ADA, EEOC, privacy) but we think there is less risk that the action will be challenged because of the "pandemic" declaration. That said, the general recommendation is to have employees/visitors do an initial questionnaire assessing travel, general health and contact. Then, only individuals that can complete the questionnaire satisfactorily will have their temp checked, as others may be sent home based on their inability to answer the questionnaire satisfactorily. Jackson Lewis has experience preparing these guidelines/questionnaires for specific clients. If anyone wants assistance creating a questionnaire or guidelines for this scenario, please contact GCCA's employment law expert team at Jackson Lewis.

Source: Jackson Lewis updated 3/18/2020

What should we consider when creating an infectious disease outbreak response plan?

All employers should be ready to implement strategies to protect their workforce from COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations. All employers need to identify and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following: (a) reducing transmission among staff, (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, (c) maintaining business operations, and (d) minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains. Some of the key considerations when making decisions on appropriate responses are:

- Disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community where the business is located.

- Impact of disease on employees that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for COVID-19 adverse health complications.

- Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, dismissals of early childhood programs and K-12 schools due to high levels of absenteeism or illness:

- Employers should 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.

- Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.

- 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 customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).

- 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.

- Coordination with state and local health officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside.

Source: [CDC – Interim Guidance for Business and Employers](#) updated 3/18/2020

Develop a Site-Specific Crisis Manual/Emergency Response Plan

A crisis manual does three things. It identifies potential crisis, lays out specific actions for addressing the crisis, and identifies those persons responsible for carrying out those actions.

When preparing for a crisis, answer these questions:

- What do I do as a first response?
- What do I tell the employees?
- What do I say to customers?
- How do I respond to the news media?
- What are my legal obligations?
- If there are fatalities, how will that be handled?
- How does insurance play a role?
- How do I minimize the company's loss?
- How do I preserve goodwill with customers and the public?

Any crisis management plan should include identifying an emergency response team, key contact information for employees, contractors and other stakeholders (insurance companies, customers, security agencies, etc.), and a back-up management plan in the event that management is impacted. The emergency response plan should be written as succinctly as possible and be well-organized.

Source: IARW Guide to Effective Warehouse Crisis Management updated 3/17/2020

For **sample emergency response plan documentation, checklists and media releases**, see pages 35 through 46 of the manual.

Ensure the plan is flexible and involve your employees in developing and reviewing your plan. Conduct a focused discussion or exercise using your plan, to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or problems that need to be corrected. Share your plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them. 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.

Source: CDC – Interim Guidance for Business and Employers updated 3/18/2020

Maintain business continuity

A business continuity plan describes how an organization will continue to function during or after some kinds of emergency, disaster or event. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has produced a free, 15-page publication focused specifically on situations involving infectious diseases. It involves planning how your key services or operations can be continued. Remembering that each business and operation is unique, the topics listed in this publication offer some basic suggestions. You will need to create a specific plan that best suits your business and operational needs.

Source: CCOHS – Flu and Infections Disease Outbreaks Business Continuity Plan Free updated 3/18/2020

Responding

During shelter-in-place orders, is our industry considered essential critical infrastructure?

On March 19, 2020 in a Memorandum on Identification of essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response the U.S. Department of Homeland Security laid out a list of "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" to help state and local officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The list was revised in a memo issued by the Department on March 28, 2020. Full guidance can be found at https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19.

At present, workers in the following cold chain-related industries are deemed "critical infrastructure":

- Employees and firms supporting the distribution of food, feed, and beverage and ingredients used in these products, including warehouse workers, vendor-managed inventory controllers and blockchain managers.

- Employees supporting or enabling transportation functions, including truck drivers, bus drivers, dispatchers, maintenance and repair technicians, warehouse workers, truck stop and rest area workers, Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) employees, towing/recovery services, roadside assistance workers, intermodal transportation personnel, and workers who maintain and inspect infrastructure (including those that require cross-jurisdiction travel).

- Workers supporting the distribution of food, pharmaceuticals (including materials used in radioactive drugs) and other medical materials, fuels, chemicals needed for water or water treatment and energy Maintenance and operation of essential highway infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and tunnels (e.g., j traffic operations centers and moveable bridge operators).

- Employees of firms providing services, supplies, and equipment that enable warehouse and operations, including cooling, storing, packaging, and distributing products for wholesale or retail sale or use. Includes cold- and frozen-chain logistics for food and critical biologic products.

- Warehouse operators, including vendors and support personnel critical for business continuity (including HVAC & electrical engineers; security personnel; and janitorial staff) and customer service for essential functions.

- Workers supporting essential maintenance, manufacturing, design, operation, inspection, security, and construction for essential products, services, and supply chain and COVID 19 relief efforts.

Source: [CISA – Identifying Critical Infrastructure during COVID-19](#) updated 3/30/2020

How do our employees prove they are essential critical infrastructure?

The Department of Homeland Security held a stakeholder call where they officially declared agriculture and food supply companies as "Critical Infrastructure". During the call they referenced the Critical Infrastructure memo and encouraged those involved in critical infrastructure to carry it with them while traveling.

GCCA has also transformed the DHS list into an "employee ID badge" that our member companies can modify with their logo and facility information. The editable Word and PDF version can be folded into half sheets and copies can be provided to all employees can be found on [GCCA's online portal](#).

We recommend also proactively sending a copy to local law enforcement. While this isn't an "official" badge by any means, we feel that proactively sharing with local police will reduce any confusion should an employee be questioned as to why they are violating the Governor's order.

Source: GCCA generated resource updated 3/30/2020

Are there test kits available to my employees?

At this point in time we do not know the availability of test kits across the United States. GCCA has partnered with other food associations to advocate the need for food warehouse facilities to have must have continued access to coronavirus test kits to ensure a healthy and adequate workforce. **GCCA will continue to provide any updates as they become available about the accessibility of testing kits.**

Source: GCCA updated 3/30/2020

Where can we find a COVID-19 Testing Site?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and want to get tested, try calling your state or local health department or a medical provider. While supplies of these tests are increasing, it may still be difficult to find a place to get tested.

Some testing facilities can be found by state and county at https://www.envive.care/ based on publicly-sourced data.

How long can the virus survive in cold environments?

Researchers from the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UCLA and Princeton University examined how long COVID-19 survives in the air as well as on copper, cardboard, plastic and stainless steel and then compared it with SARS, the coronavirus that emerged in late 2002 and killed nearly 800 people.

They found that COVID-19 was detectable in aerosols for up to three hours, up to four hours on copper and up to 24 hours on cardboard. The new coronavirus can also last up to three days on plastic and stainless steel, the scientists concluded, adding the amount of the virus left on those surfaces decreases over time. Aerosols are solid or liquid particles that hang in the air, including fog, dust and gas commonly used in medical procedures like ventilation and nebulizers.

This study was done in ambient temperature conditions.

Studies on the survivability of COVID-19 at lower temperatures have not yet been completed. Similar types of viruses can survive longer at lower temperatures, and years in the frozen state. **GCCA will continue to update this section as more research emerges.**

Source: CNBC - Coronavirus lives for hours in air particles and days on surfaces, new US study shows, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – New coronavirus stable for hours on surfaces updated 3/18/2020

How do we keep our employees healthy given they may be working additional hours?

During a pandemic like COVID-19, these actions are especially crucial for maintaining you physical and mental well-being. Most health advice can be boiled down to simple behaviors, like eating a balanced diet, exercising and getting good sleep.

1. **Nutrition** – Meals should consist of starches, protein and produce. GCCA's online course "*Working in Cold Storage: Enhancing Comfort and Productivity*" recommends that teammates working in temperature-controlled environments consume between 2,400 and 4,000 calories per day, and avoid caffeine which can cause dehydration.

2. **Fitness** – While you may not be able to go to the gym, it's okay to walk, run, or bike outside as long as you keep a safe distance. Physical activity doesn't have to mean going to the gym and plenty of research shows that everyday activities like walking, gardening and cleaning lower your risk of premature death and improve your overall health—so any amount of movement you can squeeze in counts.

3. **Stress and Sleep** – Managing stress and anxiety is crucial for getting enough sleep—and getting enough sleep is crucial for just about every other aspect of your health.

4. **Cleaning** - While the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said surface contamination doesn't seem to be the primary way the virus spreads (instead, it's through respiratory droplets expelled by a sick person), it can't hurt to wipe down high-touch objects like door knobs, railings and faucets, in addition to regular household upkeep.

5. **Healthcare** – Postpone non-essential medical appointments, such as annual physicals and dental cleanings, and using telemedicine for pre-scheduled appointments that need to happen now. If you have a pressing medical need, you can and should still seek care.

Source: Time - How to Stay Physically and Mentally Healthy While COVID-19 Has You Stuck at Home, GCCA WFLO Institute Online Learning, updated 3/19/2020

How can we help reduce employee's fear of coming to work?

The outbreak of Coronavirus may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Many of GCCA's European members, who experienced this outbreak several weeks earlier than the Americas, have shared that they saw a significant correlation between proactive communication with employees and lower absenteeism among their workforce. The value of proactive and transparent communication cannot be underestimated. See the resources section of this guide for an editable Employee FAQ document.

Additionally, support your employees by encouraging them to:

- *Share the facts* about COVID-19 and understand the actual risk to them and the people they care about. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and connect with them.

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

- Make time to unwind. Make time for other activities you enjoy.

- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Source: CDC – Mange Anxiety & Stress updated 3/19/2020

Who should we contact if one of my employees is suspected of having COVID-19?

1. **Call your Doctor:** If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice. Be sure to call before going to the doctor's office or emergency room, and they will tell you what to do.

   OR call your Local Health Department:

   If you do not have a routine doctor, contact your local health department and they will be able to redirect you to the appropriate resources. A full list of local health departments by US State can be found here: Directory of Local Health Departments by State and for Canadian Provinces and Territories contact information be found on this list of Public Health Authorities.

2. **Wear a facemask**: If possible, put on a facemask before you enter the building. If you can't put on a facemask, try to keep a safe distance from other people (at least 6 feet/3 meters away). This will help protect the people in the office or waiting room.

3. **Follow care instructions** from your healthcare provider and local health department. Your local health authorities will give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

Source: CDC - What To Do if You Are Sick, updated 3/30/2020

Is COVID-19 a reportable illness under OSHA regulations?

Instances of COVID-19 **are not reportable** (i.e., **mandatory obligation to notify OSHA by phone or in writing**) for any employer, unless there is a known workplace exposure to COVID-19 (such as in the case of a healthcare setting) and there is a death or hospitalization for a period of 24 hrs. or more. In addition, employers are only required to record (i.e., make a notation on their OSHA 300 logs, if required to be maintained) if the instance of COVID-19 is work-related and results in lost time or medical treatment beyond first aid.

Employers should not presume that an instance of COVID-19 is work-related and should assess on a case-by-case basis. For the majority of industries, COVID-19 occurrence will be from community or personal contact spread, and not tied specifically to a work-related exposure. However, employers in the health care arena will have different reporting and recording obligations as it can be assumed that they will have had work-related contact given the current pandemic.

Source: [Jackson Lewis](#) updated 3/18/2020

Should exposure occur in the workplace, what is an appropriate response?

In all workplaces where exposure to COVID-19 may occur, prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical first step in protecting workers, visitors, and others at the worksite.

1. Immediately isolate people suspected of having COVID-19. Move potentially infectious people to a location away from workers, customers, and other visitors.

2. Take steps to limit spread of the person's infectious respiratory secretions, including by providing them a facemask and asking them to wear it, if they can tolerate doing so.

3. If possible, isolate people suspected of having COVID-19 separately from those with confirmed cases of the virus to prevent further transmission, including in screening, triage, or healthcare facilities.

4. Restrict the number of personnel entering isolation areas, including the room of a patient with suspected/confirmed COVID-19.

5. Protect workers in close contact* with the sick person by using additional engineering and administrative control, safe work practices and PPE.

*CDC defines "close contact" as being about six (6) feet (approximately two meters) from an infected person or within the room or care area of an infected patient for a prolonged period while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact also includes instances where there is direct contact with infectious secretions while not wearing recommended PPE. Close contact generally does not include brief interactions, such as walking past a person.

Source: U.S. OSHA – Control and Prevention updated 3/18/2020

What protocols are recommended for the food industry when an employee/customer tests positive for COVID- 19?

The Food and Drug Administration in collaboration with the broader food industry coalition has created protocol of what to do when there is a positive test. Here is an excerpt from the full statement:

Food production facilities, distributors and wholesalers are part of our nation's "critical infrastructure" and must remain operational to feed the country. Inconsistent approaches to reacting to an employee who tests positive for COVID-19 has the potential to jeopardize our food system. This document recommends a consistent approach in how a company can continue operations in the event an individual has tested positive, given the global COVID-19 pandemic and high transmissibility of this respiratory virus from person to person. This guidance relies on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and OSHA, and will cover recommendations on:

- Steps to be taken when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 (a confirmed case) or has symptoms associated with COVID-19—cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath (presumptive or suspected case)

- Steps to be taken when an employee/facility visitor is exposed (in close contact) to an individual who is positive for COVID-19

Source: FDA - Food Industry Recommended Protocols When Employee/Customer Tests Positive for COVID- 19, March 25, 2020 updated 3/25/2020

A worker in my *facility (*food processing facility/farm*)* has tested positive for COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure that the foods I produce are safe?

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. **Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 by food.** Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality. Sick employees should follow the CDC's *What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. Employers should consult with the local health department for additional guidance.

While the primary responsibility in this instance is to take appropriate actions to protect other workers and people who might have come in contact with the ill employee, facilities should re-double their cleaning and sanitation efforts to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. For example, facilities are required to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces.

See: *FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food*.

- Food facilities are required to use EPA-registered "sanitizer" products in their cleaning and sanitizing practices.

- In addition, there is a list of EPA-registered "disinfectant" products for COVID-19 on the *Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list* that have qualified under EPA's *emerging viral pathogen program* for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

- **IMPORTANT**: Check the product label guidelines for if and where these disinfectant products are safe and recommended for use in food manufacturing areas or food establishments.

Source: U.S. Food & Drug Administration italicized question text edited by author updated 3/18/2020

How should we clean and disinfect after a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in our facility?

Timing and location of cleaning and disinfection of surfaces

- o At a school, daycare center, office, or other facility that <u>does not house people overnigh</u>t:

  - It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

  - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

Source: CDC - Environmental Clean and Disinfection Recommendations updated 3/17/2020

Should food facilities (grocery stores, manufacturing facilities, restaurants, etc.) perform any special cleaning or sanitation procedures for COVID-19?

CDC recommends routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. CDC does not recommend any additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.

View the EPA-registered disinfectant products on the *Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list* that have qualified under EPA's *emerging viral pathogen program* for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State, local, and tribal regulators use the *Food Code* published by the FDA to develop or update their own food safety rules. Generally, FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to maintain clean facilities, including, as appropriate, clean and sanitized food contact surfaces, and to have food safety plans in place.   Food safety plans include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls and include procedures for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: *FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food.*

Source: U.S. Food & Drug Administration updated 3/18/2020

Where can we source hand sanitizer for our facility?

GCCA is currently working with distilleries and organizations to get members hand sanitizer in response to increased demand and depleted resources due to COVID-19. Here are two resources you can use to find a distillery near you that is producing hand sanitizer:

- Click here to see a List of Distilleries Making Hand Sanitizer to Fight COVID-19 from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

- Click here for a map of Distilleries Making Hand Sanitizer from The American Distilling Institute

We've created a form letter members can customize to reach out to these distilleries and make the case for selling the product to you, however, acknowledging that hospitals and the medical industry are first in line for the product. We're giving you this tool to ask that the food supply industry be one of the next in line for purchase of this critical product.

Recovering

Do I need to recall food products produced in the facility during the time that the worker was potentially shedding the virus while working?

We do not anticipate that food products would need to be recalled or be withdrawn from the market because of COVID-19, as there is currently no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food or food packaging.

Additionally, facilities are required to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. For example, facilities are required to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces.

Source: [U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#) updated 3/18/2020

If a worker in my *facility (*food processing facility/farm*) has tested positive for COVID-19, should I close the facility? If so, for how long?

Food facilities need to follow protocols set by local and state health departments, which may vary depending on the amount of community spread of COVID-19 in a given area. These decisions will be based on public health risk of person-to-person transmission – not based on food safety.

Source: [U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#) italicized question text edited by author updated 3/18/2020

Do I need to ask other workers who may have been exposed to a worker who tested positive for COVID-19 to self-quarantine for 14 days?

Employers need to follow guidelines set by state and local authorities. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality. Sick employees should follow the CDC's [What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19](#)). Employers should consult with the local health department for additional guidance.

Source: [U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#) updated 3/18/2020

When is it safe for an infected employee to come back to work?

People with COVID-19 who have stayed home (home isolated) can stop home isolation under the following conditions:

- o *If you will not have a test* to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:

    - 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

- o *If you will be tested* to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:

    - You no longer have a 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
      you received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

Source: CDC - What To Do if You Are Sick updated 3/17/2020

Resources

Labor and Workforce Solutions

We recognize IARW warehouse members might need assistance finding additional associates to backfill many roles within the warehouse facility in the event that one or more of your teammate's tests positive for COVID-19 and is away from work for an extended period of time. In that event, we have compiled a list of resources that could be helpful to you in filling those positions.

Staffing Agencies and Contact Information

Bluecrew
Cynthia Fisher, Account Executive
cynthia@bluecrewjobs.com |757 408-3128

Jobble
Alec Mahony
alec@jobble.com | 508 566 7403 | info.jobble.com/hire/global-cold-chain-alliance

Othrsource
Todd Kieffer, Senior Vice President
www.othrsource.com | todd@othrsource.com

Trillium Staffing
Andrew Carter, National Product Manager Construction Division
jcarter@trilliumconstruction.net |Office: 615 538 5413 |Cell: 615 240 9337

Job Descriptions

If you need to quickly post positions, utilize the standard warehouse position descriptions in the IARW Guide to Effective Warehouse Administration. Provided are templates of job descriptions that members can easily use off-the-shelf for their own purposes.

Download the Guide to Effective Warehouse Administration

Employment Law

Receive legal guidance on employment law questions and issues related to COVID-19 from Jackson Lewis. GCCA has a special relationship with employment lawyers at the firm Jackson Lewis. Through this special relationship, Jackson Lewis lawyers will aid members in understanding if they need legal assistance with labor and employment issues at no cost. If it is determined that legal assistance is needed, members will receive a 15% discount on Jackson Lewis rates if they decide to use Jackson Lewis as their legal representation. You can either contact GCCA staff first or Rachel Ehlers directly for any questions related to COVID-19.

Rachel Ehlers, Attorney at Law, Jackson Lewis P.C.
Direct: +1 512 362 7409 | Rachel.Ehlers@jacksonlewis.com

Supplies

Thermometers

At an FDA briefing call on March 18, 2020 it was recommended that food industry work with the healthcare agencies to procure touchless thermometers. Listen to the full briefing here.

GCCA has also reached out to several different manufactures of thermometers and at this time there does not seem to be a shortage, unlike at the retail level. We would suggest contacting companies to understand delivery timelines and quantity requirements.

Exergen
617 923 9900 |www.exergen.com

Braun
1 800 477 0457 |www.braunhealthcare.com

Kinsa Health
415 236 4811 |sales@kinsahealth.com |www.kinsahealth.co

Cleaning Supplies

Below is a list of vendors that supply industrial cleaning products to assist you in sourcing supplies for your facilities:

Grainger
Review Products
Phone: 1-800-GRAINGER
(1-800-472-4643)
Contact/Email

WebrestaurantStore
Review Products
Online Chat

Global Industrial
Review Products
Phone:1-888-978-7759
Contact

Uline
1-800-295-5510
Review Products
customer.service@uline.com

ReStockIt
Review Products
Online Chat

P&G Professional
Review Products
1-800-332-7787

Cleanitsupply.com
Review Products
1-800-998-3295
Online Chat

Uno Clean
Review Products
224.654.6500
sales@unoclean.com

MSC
Review Products
 1-800-645-7270

Dobmeier
Review Products
1-800-870-2006

Communication Templates

Communicate to Your Customers or Suppliers

Dear Customer (or Supplier),

With the impacts of COVID-19 on our local business community already in effect, in addition to good hand hygiene and common-sense precautions with your employees and patrons, [company name] encourages all local businesses to consider the following:

For your business: Prepare for negative economic impacts.

- Capital: Create, confirm, or expand your line of credit.
- Staffing: Develop staffing plans for varying levels of customers and revenue (what does an 80% scenario plan look like?).
- Insurance: Check with your insurance provider to understand your coverage and options.

For your customers: Make your place of business as hygienic as possible and communicate what you are doing to customers, so they feel comfortable visiting.

For your employees: Check, modify, and communicate HR policies regarding remote working, sick-leave, and compensation during health crisis. Try to ensure your policies are as flexible and non-punitive as possible. Sick employees should be encouraged to stay home.

For your workflow: Cross-train employees for key functions so that daily schedules can continue relatively uninterrupted by potential employee absences. Where relevant, consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time; and create and test remote employee collaboration systems (consider apps such as Slack and Zoom).

For your cashflow: Communicate with your landlord (or tenants) and lenders about expectations and request flexibility (better to have that conversation now).

For yourself: Eat well, sleep, and exercise. Taking care of yourself in this time of stress will improve your resistance to infection and resilience in managing difficult business situations. And of course, wash your hands all the dang time and don't touch your face, or anyone else, for that matter.

For your Company: For us to best serve you, we need to know and share what our members are doing to manage risks. To that end, please tell us what what's working and what you need from us!

Our office will [remain open] OR [have reduced hours] as a "Handshake-Free Zone" and we are a ["go" on all upcoming shipments] OR [cancelling upcoming events]. Please keep an eye on our website for updates on events, company news, and resources to help your business weather this trying time.

Communicate Business Changes to Your Staff

The [company name] is committed to providing a safe working environment for you and to minimizing the potential economic and business impact for our customers. We want to assure you that we have a plan in place to address the current COVID-19 situation. To ensure a safe and productive workplace, the following strategies will be followed:

- We will continue to [conduct business as usual] [revise our days and hours open to] [list hours of operation.]
- We will evaluate business travel as it approaches.
- You are encouraged to use respiratory etiquette and safe hand washing practices. Additionally, you are encouraged to use hand sanitizer to supplement handwashing or when handwashing is not an option.
- You are asked to stay home if sick. If you arrive at work sick you will be sent home.
- We are aware of the impact that closed schools, child daycare or adult daycare centers have on many of you. If you are impacted by a closure, please notify your supervisor. Supervisors can coordinate working from home on a case-by-case basis.

Because of the potential that you or a family member may become ill or that our offices may need to close on short notice, we ask that you take your laptop home each evening. If you do not have a laptop, one will be made available for you.

As stated above, we have a plan in place to help ensure your safety. We will continue to follow the advice of government and health organizations to determine next steps.

Communicate a Health Reminder to Your Staff

Subject: What can we do during this time to reduce risk of COVID-19?

Dear Employees,

Our role as a company in ensuring the country's food supply has been recognized by the **Department of Homeland Security as part of the country's critical infrastructure***. Your role and ability to remain healthy is paramount to accomplishing this mission.* **So, what can each of us do?**

1. **Wash your hands** *often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.*

2. *If soap and water are not readily available,* **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol***. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.*

3. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** *with unwashed hands.*

4. **Avoid close contact** *with people who are sick.*

5. *Put* **distance between yourself and other people** *if COVID-19 is spreading in your community by practicing social distancing.*

6. **Stay home if you are sick***, except to get medical care.*

7. **Cover your mouth and nose** *with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissues in the trash.*

8. **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily***. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.*

Source: [CDC - How to Protect Yourself](#) updated 3/17/2020

Thank you for your continued diligence and effort to ensure we keep our workplace as safe and healthy as possible. We will continue to follow up with relevant information from government and health organizations as we figure out next steps.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Printable and Sharable Resources

Select a resource to be directed to a version for sharing or printing

COVID-19 Implications for EPA's Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 3/27/2020

Food Industry Recommended Protocols When Employee/Customer Tests Positive for COVID- 19

Source: FDA, Food Industry Coalition 3/23/2020

Memo for Identification of Essential Critical Workers

Source: US Department of Homeland Security - CISA 3/20/2020

Form Letter for Distilleries for Selling Sanitizer to Your Facility

Source: GCCA 3/26/2020

Printable ID for Essential Critical Worker (US)

(*on webpage*)
Source: Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, GCCA 3/30/2020

The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America

Source: OSHA/HHS 3/18/2020

CEBA Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce Letter to Customers Template

Source: GCCA 3/26/2020

Printable ID for Essential Critical Worker (Canada)

(*on webpage*)
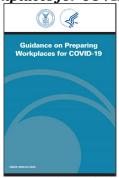*Source: Critical Infrastructure – Government of Canada, GCCA 3/20/2020*

Employee FAQ for COVID-19

(*PDF*| *Word–editable*)
Source: Small Business Legislative Council, GCCA 3/20/2020

Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

Source: OSHA/HHS 3/18/2020

COVID-19 Print Resources

Source: CDC 3/18/2020

Crisis Management Manuel

Source: IARW Guide to Effective Warehouse Crisis Management 3/18/2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Fighting Products

Source: American Chemistry Council 3/18/2020

Canadian Coronavirus disease: Awareness resources posters

Source: Government of Canada 3/18/2020

Workplace Tips for Employee Poster

Source: US Chamber of Commerce 3/18/2020

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Foundation

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