**Returning to Work Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic**

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that has many symptoms that vary person to person, from no symptoms to severe. Common symptoms include:

1. Fever or chills (100.4 or higher)

2. Cough

3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

**General Practices to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A picture containing food, drawing, light  Description automatically generated | Washing your hands, often & thoroughly |
|  |  Avoiding close contact |
|  |  Covering your mouth & nose with cloth face cover when around others |
| A picture containing drawing  Description automatically generated | * Covering coughs & sneezes
 |
|  | * Cleaning & Disinfecting
 |
|  | * Monitoring your health
* Staying home when sick
 |

Other symptoms include headache, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea. Those at higher risk for severe illness include older adults (risk increases with age, with 85+ at greatest risk) and people of any age with underlying medical conditions such as: COPD, immunocompromised state, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, sickle cell disease, chronic kidney disease and serious heart conditions. See CDC’s website for more information.

COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, be inhaled into the lungs or settle on surfaces where people pick them up. COVID-19 may be spread by people who do not have any symptoms.

**EXPOSURE RISK VARIES BY JOB**

**Some jobs are higher risk than others. Work with your employer to determine your level of risk. This will help determine the appropriate PPE to wear to protect yourself as well as identify effective policies and procedures for infection control.**

 **Very High Risk- High potential exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during close contact**

 **medical procedures**

 **High Risk- high potential exposure to known or suspected COVID-19 sources**

 **Medium Risk- jobs with frequent or close contact with others who may be infected but not known to be**

 **Low Risk- jobs that can maintain 6’ from others most of the day**

**PREVENTION MEASURES**

Physical Distancing: Staying at least 6 feet from other people at all times!

* Telework if you can
* Stagger work schedules to reduce congestion at entrances during common hours and the number of people in the building at one time
* Reconfigure desk chairs and/or workstations to ensure 6’ of distance
* Limit the number of guests in the building and how long they can stay
* Use virtual meetings and communication boards or to convey information
* Limit the number of staff in break rooms and other communal areas (water jug, hallways, etc.).
* Maintain 6’ from others when smoking
* Use designated entrances and exits

Personal Hygiene

* Wash hands before/after eating, using the restroom, touching your face, etc.
* Use hand sanitizer station & let management know when it is out
* Wear masks when not able to maintain 6’
* Wear gloves as necessary
* All guests should wear masks or face covers

Cleaning & Disinfecting

* First clean, then disinfect: disinfecting is less efficient on dirty surfaces
* All high touch surfaces should be cleaned ***and*** disinfected routinely
* Read & follow all label directions for mixing, applying, storage & disposal
* All cleaning agents used need to approved for use and effective against COVID-19
* Wear gloves and ventilate the area
* Let management know if products are running low

Daily Screening & Health Checks

* Upon arrival each day (guests & staff)
* Temperature screening
* Symptoms self-check process and/or log
* Leave work if feeling ill
* Do not come to work if sick or someone in the home is sick with COVID-19 symptoms

Other Health & Safety Practices:

* Cancel all nonessential travel
* When you have to travel be extra vigilant. Monitor yourself for 14 days and if symptoms present, quarantine for 14 days.
* Talk to you supervisor about flexible leave policies
* Request accommodations to reduce risk if you or someone in your home is at higher risk
* Ask questions and request training for cleaning, safety, wearing PPE, etc.
* Express your concerns, observations and new knowledge of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Resources and References:

CDC. (2020). COVID-19 Resources. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

NPAIHB. (2020). COVID-19 Resources for Tribes. http://www.npaihb.org/covid-19/

Washington Department of Labor & Industry. (2020). COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Health.

OSHA. (2020). Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19. https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

WHO. (2020). Advice on the Use of Masks in the Context of COVID-19. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks

EPA. (2020). List of products. <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/disinfectant-use-and-coronavirus-covid-19>

**FACE COVERINGS, MASKS & RESPIRATORS**

When combined with other measures such as physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting and washing hands, wearing masks can be very effective in preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Masks protect you and those around you. Masks should be worn when 6’ of distance between you and other persons cannot be maintained.

Face coverings, masks and respirators can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Consider the risk level of your job when choosing the type of covering you should be wearing:

 Nonmedical fabric covering or mask- These may be homemade or purchased but should have a minimum of 3 layers. Recommended for those work in low or medium risk jobs.

 Medical Mask- should be reserved for at risk persons or those working in high to very high risk jobs.

 Respirators- The N95 respirator is the most common. Be sure any respirator used is certified by NIOSH, OSHA or FDA.

**DOs & DON’Ts of Wearing Face Coverings**

**DO** wash after each use

**DO** air dry in sunlight if possible

**DO** wear a tight fitting cover or mask

**DO** make sure it covers nose and mouth

**DO** ask questions or make requests

**DO** wash your hands before putting on and after

 taking off

**DO** remove by the straps

**DON’T** touch the front while wearing or taking off

**DON’T** share with others

**DON’T** wear a cover that obstructs your breathing

**DON’T** wear under your nose