

Employer's Guide To Confronting COVID-19

Like every safety champion, protecting your team is your number one priority, especially in the age of COVID-19. With developments changing regularly, there are always new precautions to take and policies to update to remain as proactive as possible

After speaking to different members of our own community of safety nerds, we would like to share some innovative measures they have taken to ensure the safety of their employees and front-line workers.

By focusing on tactics geared towards your on-site team, your off-site team, and those that we can offer from our own eCompliance toolbox, you'll be able to mitigate the risks at your workplace to ensure your team is always healthier, safer, stronger.

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SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to extend our thanks to our eCompliance community for sharing these incredible strategies and techniques. We'd like to show our sincere appreciation to everyone, especially **John Myers** (Corporate Director of EHS at Roseburg Forest Products) and **Cassandra Crosier** (Health and Safety Coordinator at Roseburg Forest Products), in addition to **Marina Furmanov** (Executive Director of Lab Operations for Alexandria LaunchLabs) and **Mel Shaughnessy-Daub** (Chief Administrative Officer at Maxim Group).

It is in times like these that we can learn from one another, in order to put our best foot forward to confront COVID-19.

Employer's Guide To Fighting COVID-19

Fortify Your Foundation

1. Keep Channels of Communication Open

- As a safety leader, you have an opportunity to reassure your team and induce a sense of calm, not panic. Keep the mental state and psychology of your front-line in mind by adjusting your verbiage and avoiding the use of words like “crisis” and “outbreak”, so as not to induce more fear
- There is immense pressure placed on safety champions and leaders at the moment, so take the time to consider their mental health and well-being
 - > Make time to check in with team members to see how they are doing and be a source of strength and support for them
- With the amount of misinformation that is circulating, it is important to lower anxiety levels by making sure that you are raising awareness and educating your team on the facts, including methods of transmission and symptoms of the virus:
 - > Consider creating a portal or resource page as a way to allow your team to receive updated information with the news surrounding COVID-19, in addition to company updates
 - > Encourage training (eCompliance has two COVID-19 eLearning courses available at no charge, to ensure the safety of your employees).
- Regularly communicate any changes to policies and procedures to your team through email or weekly video recaps

2. Check in with Your COVID-19 team

- Assuming you have already assembled your COVID-19 team and communicated the different responsibilities to every member, continue to meet on a weekly basis to adjust or review policies, procedures, and important documents making sure they are in line with guidelines outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO).

- If your organization is spread out across multiple locations, make sure that you have put a cross-functional team in place, to align all policies, protocols, and actions across every site
- Set a communication cadence for new information and updates. It's important to make sure your COVID-19 team has created a system that is flexible to allow for regular updates, changes, and communications to keep up with new information and regulations as they arise.
- Have an action plan in place to follow the necessary steps for positive cases which may arise across your organization

Tactics for Your On-site Team

1. Enforce proper PPE

- Make sure all workers are supplied with proper PPE such as masks and gloves to ensure the safety of your team (masks can be fashioned from cloth, allowing them to be multilayered to further protect your workers)
- Encourage team members to not touch their face using their gloves and to remove them before eating
 - > It's important to note that gloves must be disposed of as a biohazard rather than waste, to reduce the spread of the virus. Make sure that your facility is compliant and has the proper means to treat these objects as biohazards to be disposed using the necessary steps.
- Request that all workers wash their facemasks daily and to be careful to remove them without touching their nose, face, or eyes. Workers must wash their hands immediately after removing their masks

2. Provide handwashing and hand sanitizing stations

- Ensure that all front-line workers have access to handwashing and sanitizing stations on-site
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- Your workforce should also be given a regular supply of sanitizing materials to disinfect their workstations and wipe down their respective areas
- To reduce the rate of transmission, it's also important to ask team members to clean surfaces which are commonly touched in restrooms after every use

3. Create alternative methods to reduce contact with surfaces

- Limit the number of objects at workstations making decontamination and cleaning process easier, while reducing the risk of spreading the virus
- Consider reducing the need for workers to touch certain surfaces such as door handles, for example. Think about finding methods and technology which will allow workers to open doors with their feet rather than their hands

4. Implement staggered shifts and change schedules

- To reduce the number of workers on-site, enforce changes in schedules and staggered shifts
 - > Limit carpooling and mandate that every team member operates their own vehicle
 - > Make sure only a certain number of workers are on-site at one time, agreed upon by your COVID-19 team
 - > Shift schedules of punch in and punch out times between teams to make sure that there is a gap between one team entering and another leaving

5. Maintain social distancing

- Two meters (approx. 6 feet) should always be enforced between workers at all times in every area of your organization, including common areas and lunchrooms
- Consider placing glass or plastic barriers between team members in certain spaces for their protection

- Set up tents outside for workers to have more room to spread out

6. Consider no-touch thermal temperature readings

- Though many organizations have begun daily no-touch thermal temperature readings, it's important to note that many people may be **asymptomatic and show no signs of fever** or that the fever itself may develop several days after infection (this reinforces the use of masks and gloves at all times on-site)
- If an employee does feel feverish and wishes to be checked, record their temperature using the no-touch thermal devices and keep a log of their symptoms
- If no-touch thermal temperature readings is a method you do wish to implement at your facility, consider the following:
 - > Establish an area of entry where workers will have their temperature checked upon arrival
 - > Log all results on a daily basis to track any significant changes
 - > Send workers with high fevers home and urge them to contact their nearest health care facility as soon as possible

7. Circulate necessary forms

- Daily COVID-19 symptom check:
 - > Electronically circulate a daily COVID-19 symptom check form to remain proactive. Make it simple for team members to fill out on a daily basis, requesting only a yes or no answer next to common symptoms of coronavirus
- Bi-monthly Questionnaire:
 - > To do your due diligence, ask your front-line force to fill out a quick questionnaire including questions such as "Have you associated with anyone who may have contracted coronavirus within the last 14 days?" and "Have you traveled to any sister facilities inside the country?"

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8. Reduce in-person meetings

- Minimize the amount of in-person meetings you have with your workforce to reduce the chance of virus transmission between team members
- If meetings are necessary, ensure that they are always only limited to a maximum of 10 people or less with at least two meters (approx. 6 feet) of distance between each member

9. Reduce on-site visitations

- Halt visitations from external members to your site, with the exception of service providers as well as the delivery of materials or goods
- Ensure there is a specific form or questionnaire electronically sent out to those who may be visiting the site

10. Hygiene at your worksites

- Ask employees to wash their hands regularly for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Take the extra step by decontaminating all surfaces such as door handles, elevator buttons, and any other common surfaces which may be used by several people throughout the day on a regular basis
- Ensure that all areas of the site are decontaminated daily

11. Develop an action plan for positive COVID-19 cases

- In the event that a team member, does test positive for the virus, make sure they remain at home and that the necessary individuals in management and HR are informed
 - > This is something that should also be shared with the cross-functional team mentioned earlier, to track the number of cases across your organization as well as possible team members who may have been exposed

- Make sure a thorough decontamination of the site is enforced

Tactics for Your Off-Site Team

1. Enhance productivity and ergonomics

- At this point, your off-site team has been working from home for several weeks and it's important to make sure that they have the means to be as productive as possible
 - > Check in that everyone has an appropriate work from home set up, in terms of ergonomics. If certain elements are missing which would assist in their productivity, send it to them through mail or compensate them for it

2. Stay connected

- Ensure that managers of all teams are always connected to their team members virtually with daily or weekly touchpoints for all members to stay aligned in terms of daily tasks and weekly objectives.
- We encourage turning your camera on to maintain a sense of routine and normalcy as you would around the office

3. Encourage virtual gatherings

- As your off-site team is quarantined, many may be alone or feel extremely isolated, so maintaining a sense of social interaction is vital:
 - > Begin weekly, virtual social gatherings where members of your team can chat and relax with one another while playing a fun game

4. Encourage work life balance

- With no clear definition between work and your personal life, it's easy to get caught up in tasks and forget to relax:

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- > It's important to remind team members to take a break from their screen every once in a while, so encourage them to take a full hour lunch break
- > Remind your colleagues that work ends at 5pm, and encourage them to put their laptops away so they do not get burnt out or over work themselves

Ways eCompliance Can Help

1. Update your formal hazard assessments

- These documents are usually updated annually or 'as required'. If you haven't already, it is now time to incorporate COVID-19 risks and controls associated with key activities of your team. Updating your hazard assessments will help re-frame the risk of COVID-19 appropriately in context of all the other risks and hazards your workforce faces every day. These facts could also help direct the workforce's energy to the right actions instead of simply fear
- eCompliance offers ways to automatically score, formalize, and communicate your hazard assessments to any group of your staff or entire company right on their mobile device or via email

2. Modify daily forms and front-line supervisor reports

- Make the COVID-19 hazards and controls especially clear and reinforced in daily behavior by updating your regular safety inspections, audits, reports, etc.
- Add inspection of controls like "sanitizer present", "gloves being worn", "surfaces cleaned" for an office environment for example, or positive recognition of employees making obvious efforts to keep safe distances
- In eCompliance, all updates to forms propagate instantly to all users of the mobile app allowing for quick changes on the fly as risks emerge and controls need to be reinforced (and reported on)

3. Introduce COVID-19 symptoms to reporting process

- Introduce an incident notification process for those who have symptoms or are self-isolating so there is a single center of truth across the workforce

4. Report daily and weekly to the executive team

- Even if all of your controls for COVID-19 are effective on the frontlines, how do you know if you can't measure or communicate trends and themes to your executive teams
- **eCompliance** allows you to automate the reporting of adherence to any of the items above so your executive team understands the numbers, identifies which workforce populations may be at greatest risk, and drives the right communications and behaviors

5. Push updates and procedural changes

- Communication with email can easily get lost and does not always remain top of mind, but ensuring your workforce has easy access to recent communications via a push notification to their phone will help immensely
- This will help centralize communications, keep a clear and consistent message, and show that COVID-19 is a threat that is being responded to with full force with the HSMS you have built

6. Share a COVID-19 communication form from your president or CEO

- Distribute a form from your executive team to your staff
 - eCompliance offers ways you can distribute a message easily to any group of staff
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