

## COVID-19 Crisis Management for Manufacturing Operations: Immediate Best Practices

### CDC Presentation Summary and Excerpts from the March 20<sup>th</sup> MLC-NAM Webinar

This document captures the guidance, in summary form, provided by Mr. Todd Niemeyer, a certified industrial hygienist at the Centers for Disease Control, during a [webinar](#) hosted by the National Association of Manufacturers and the Manufacturing Leadership Council to offer best practices for manufacturers during the COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, manufacturers can supplement plans and response with [this letter](#) and [additional information](#) from Dr. Redfield from the CDC as [requested by the NAM](#).

**Issue Background:** Pandemics occur when new viruses emerge to infect people and can spread between people sustainably. Because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against this new virus, it is spreading globally in real-time. Please visit the [CDC COVID-19](#) website for the most up-to-date information. This is a rapidly evolving outbreak and the website is updated regularly.

#### **About CDC's Interim Business Guidance:**

The [interim guidance for business and employers](#) was developed to help employers decrease the spread of COVID-19 and may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in non-healthcare facilities. This guidance also provides planning considerations for preventing community spread of COVID-19. CDC recognizes that businesses and workplaces may experience interruptions in normal business operations due to COVID-19. CDC encourages workplaces to review the interim guidance for businesses and employers in order to plan and respond to COVID-19.

Employers can use strategies to prevent acute respiratory illnesses in non-health care settings. These would include things like simply encouraging sick employees to stay home, separating sick employees, emphasizing respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees, performing routine environmental cleaning throughout facilities and common areas, and advising employees before and after traveling to take certain steps.

#### **About Responding to an Infectious Disease Outbreak:**

An infectious disease outbreak response plan can also provide employers with a strategy to protect the workforce from COVID-19 while ensuring the continuity of operations.

An infectious disease outbreak response plan should include possible work-related exposure and health risks to employees, explore flexible work sites such as telecommuting and flexible work hours in accordance with human resource policies. The [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#), also known as OSHA, also released [guidance](#) on preparing workplaces for COVID-19. According to OSHA, most Americans will experience either low, also called cautionary, or medium exposure risk levels at their job or place of employment. CDC interim guidance provides links to the OSHA guidance as well as other resources to help businesses and employees plan, prepare and respond to an outbreak of COVID-19.

The following Q&A excerpted from the March 20 webinar digs deeper into questions and concerns expressed by manufacturers over the past several weeks.

**If an employee in a manufacturing environment has a confirmed case of COVID-19 what are the proper protocols to prevent community spread?**

For confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, sick employees should follow the CDC recommended steps. These include: stay home except to get medical care, separate yourself from other people in your home, this is known as home isolation, call ahead before visiting your doctor, wear a face mask if you are sick and one is available, cover your coughs and sneezes, clean your hands often, avoid sharing personal household items, clean all high touch surfaces daily and monitor your symptoms. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to end the isolation are met in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

Employees who develop symptoms including fever, cough or shortness of breath should notify their supervisor and stay home. Employees who have symptoms upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers and visitors and sent home. It's important to follow the CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendation. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection and to disinfect, there are several methods which we will be discussing in a couple of questions later.

If an employee is confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Employees should then self-monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19, including things like fever cough or shortness of breath.

**If a manufacturing an employee in a non-production setting has a confirmed case of COVID-19, what are the proper protocols to prevent community spread?**

The steps for employees in non-production settings are the same as those for employees in the manufacturing environment.

**If a plant shutdown occurs as a result of a COVID-19 case or outbreak, what is the recommended time offline to disinfect, and what is the appropriate timeframe to resume operations?**

The areas used by the sick person should be closed off. It is not necessary to shut down the entire facility. It's important to wait as long as practical before cleaning and disinfecting the affected area to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area and, if possible, wait up to 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas. For example, offices, bathrooms and common areas used by the ill person, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfecting. To disinfect you can use products that meet the EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 also called the [EPAN List](#). You can also use diluted bleach or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. These products have demonstrated efficacy against the harder to kill virus, qualified for emerging viral pathogens claims and demonstrated efficacy against another human coronaviruses similar to SARS-CoV-2. Operations can resume as soon as the cleaning and disinfection are complete.

**If an infected employee physically contacted manufacturing equipment, inputs and/or outputs, what steps are needed to disinfect the equipment, the raw materials and potentially the finished products?**

If the objects in question are not accessible to employees, they may have little potential for contamination and may not present an exposure hazard or concern. If equipment inputs and outputs are thought to be contaminated, you should follow the CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations. These recommendations indicate that dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Then you can use the disinfection products located on the EPA N list, diluted bleach or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. As indicated before, this information can be found on the cleaning and disinfection guidance on the CDC COVID-19 business website as well. If objects are thought to be contaminated and cannot be cleaned, they can be isolated.

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning about how it spreads. Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials; some studies have suggested anywhere between hours and up to nine days, depending on surface material environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes but this is not thought to be the main way that the virus spreads.

**What are the recommended strategies and practices for a workplace quarantine if employees are becoming ill?**

Employees who have symptoms including fever, cough or shortness of breath should notify their supervisor and stay home. Employees who appear to have symptoms including fever, cough or shortness of breath upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be immediately separated from other employees, customers and visitors and sent home. Sick employees should follow CDC recommended steps and employees should not return to work until the criteria to end home isolation are met in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

**If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, should the impacted facility expect a CDC investigation? If so, what should the facility expect in order to be prepared, and what type of interruption should be anticipated?**

While CDC may deploy staff to investigate clusters of confirmed COVID-19, it does not routinely investigate every impacted workplace. Employers should cooperate with state and local health officials.

**Is the CDC developing a nationwide rapid home test for COVID-19 that could be deployed in the workplace?**

Currently CDC's focus has been on increasing state and local laboratory testing.

If you are in close contact with someone with COVID-19, or you are a resident in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and you develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. They will decide whether you need to be tested but keep in mind there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people

who are mildly ill may be able to self-isolate and care for themselves at home. The best thing you can do is take steps to protect yourself from respiratory illness such as washing your hands often and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

**If community members outside of the workplace or facility are diagnosed with COVID-19, what procedures should be deployed to prevent community spread beyond the current interim guidance to businesses that the CDC has already provided?**

CDC updates its website and guidance as needed and as new information arises. It's important to coordinate with state and local health departments as well who may advise on additional policies and procedures based on local conditions. Employers may also want to use the OSHA guidance for preparing workplaces for COVID-19. It has information about risk categories and steps that employers can take to reduce transmission.

**End note:**

CDC is addressing specific questions related to COVID-19 through the [CDC information site](#). If you have questions, you can complete a contact form online or call 800-CDC-INFO or 800-232-4636.

**Helpful links:**

- COVID-19 symptoms: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)
- What to do if you're sick (including when to discontinue home isolation): [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html)
- Cleaning and disinfection: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)
- EPA's list of disinfectants to use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)