



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 15 – April 6 - April 10, 2020
COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Over the past few weeks, there has been a barrage of information regarding the virus causing COVID-19. Most of this information has produced more questions than answers. This week we will focus on answering a few of the most commonly asked questions, specifically for the workplace.

Monday – Why are we seeing such a rapid rise in COVID-19 cases?

Prior to the tail end of 2019, very few people had ever heard of Coronavirus. Now it seems like we hear of little else. What has caused this extreme rise in the number of cases in a matter of 4 or 5 months?

The growing number of COVID-19 cases reflects the rapid spread of COVID-19 due to the highly contagious nature of the virus. Another contributing factor is the highly connected nature of our world. Advances in technology allows for the ease and accessibility of travel from one end of the world to another in a relatively short amount of time. Also, as social beings, we are inclined to seek interaction with others around us. These factors make the current outbreak a very dangerous situation as they have the ability to accelerate the spread of the disease. For these reasons, the highest recommendation for preventing the spread is limiting contact with others as much as possible.

Tuesday – Why are certain businesses continuing to operate during the pandemic?

Many businesses have shut their doors or drastically limited their onsite personnel over the last few weeks as a result of government mandates to increase social distancing. However, essential businesses are continuing to work through these conditions. Why's that?

The government has issued a memorandum stating, "If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule." Every person contributes to society one way or another. In times like these, some must contribute through their work in order for society to continue to effectively function.

Wednesday – What is a critical infrastructure industry?

Yesterday we discussed that certain businesses must continue to operate because they are critical infrastructure industries, but what is a critical infrastructure industry?

There are 16 critical infrastructure sectors whose assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, are considered so vital that if discontinued, would have a debilitating effect on security, the economy, and public health and safety.

Essential critical infrastructure industries:

- Chemical
- Communications
- Dams
- Emergency Services
- Commercial Facilities
- Critical Manufacturing
- Defense Industrial Base
- Energy
- Food and Agriculture
- Healthcare and Public Health
- Nuclear Reactors, materials and waste
- Water and wastewater systems
- Financial Services
- Government Facilities



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- Information Technology
- Transportation

Thursday – My business is still operating, what should I do if feel ill or am caring for someone who has symptoms?

The first line of defense in preventing the spread of the Coronavirus in the workplace is encouraging employees to stay at home if they are sick or caring for someone who is sick. There may be times when coming to work while under the weather is expected. However, with the Covid-19 outbreak, erring on the side of caution is the best policy. If you feel unwell or are in close contact with someone who is unwell, do not come to work and risk exposing your colleagues. Many businesses and government agencies are making accommodations for employees who are taking time off due to illness or caring for family members. There are many options available.

Friday – Open Discussion

We've only addressed a few select questions this week. Now let's open it up and discuss your questions, comments, and concerns.