

# COVID-19 EMPLOYEE GUIDELINE

**RECORD HOLDER**

HEAD - HUMAN RESOURCES

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**VERSION**

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# INTRODUCTION

This guide was prepared for our employees to assist them in keeping themselves and their families safe during this pandemic. This guide has prepared with the help and informational materials from the following institutions:

1. United States FDA
2. United States Department of Labor OSHA
3. United Nations
4. World Health Organization
5. Institute for Food Safety at Cornell University
6. Directorate of Health Services, Government of Kerala
7. Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

This guidance is not a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations. It contains recommendations as well as descriptions of mandatory safety and health standards. The recommendations are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employees to stay safe during this pandemic.

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## **COVID-19**

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease in Hubei Province, China to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated there is a high risk of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spreading to other countries around the world.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

All sections of our society - including businesses and employers - must play a role if we are to stop the spread of this disease.

## **SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19**

Infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause illness ranging from mild to severe and, in some cases, can be fatal.

Common symptoms typically include:

- fever
- tiredness
- dry cough

Other symptoms include:

- shortness of breath
- aches and pains
- sore throat
- diarrhoea
- nausea
- runny nose

Some people infected with the virus have reported experiencing other non-respiratory symptoms. Other people, referred to as *asymptomatic cases*, have experienced no symptoms at all. According to UN WHO, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

The COVID-19 virus affects different people in different ways. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease and most infected people will develop mild to moderate symptoms and recover without requiring special treatment. People who have underlying medical conditions and those over 60 years old have a higher risk of developing severe disease and death.

## **HOW WILL MY WORK BE AFFECTED?**

As a responsible corporate citizen, we are bound by the State and National Government's directions and regulations. As of now, there are no specific direction for the food industry and work will continue as normal. However, you should try to safeguard yourself and your colleagues from coronavirus by following the guidelines mentioned in this handbook.

As and when State or National Government issues directions, we will update you and advise you what actions needs to be taken.

## **HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?**

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects - and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If they are standing within one meter of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover.

However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age: people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

# HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 AT OUR WORKPLACE?

These measures below will help prevent the spread of infections in our workplace, such as colds, flu and stomach bugs, and protect yourself and our customers and contractors.

1. Make sure your private workplace is clean and hygienic.
2. Surfaces (e.g. desks, tables, door knobs, table etc.) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly. Contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads.
3. Keep your hands clean. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
5. Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm.
6. Instead of a handshake, give a friendly wave or elbow bump.
7. Use any necessary personal protective equipment, as directed by the Factory Supervisor or Manager.
8. Keep a distance of 2 metres between you, your coworkers, and customers. Increase distance between desks, tables and workstations. Reduce activities that require close physical proximity or contact with people, such as team meetings. Limit any contacts closer than 2 metres to the shortest time possible.
9. Restrict all onsite meetings and cancel all scheduled meetings and events planned at our workplace.



# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

**You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:**

1. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. *Why?* Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
2. Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. *Why?* When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. *Why?* Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
4. Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. *Why?* Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
5. Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority. *Why?* National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
6. Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hotspots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places – especially if you are an older person or have diabetes, heart or lung disease. *Why?* You have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 in one of these areas.

# THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN TRAVELLING

## Before travelling:

- Non-essential travel should not occur at this time. You should get prior permission from the Director before all work-related travel.
- Make sure you have the latest information on areas where COVID-19 is spreading. You can find this at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>
- Based on the latest information, consider the risks and benefits related to any upcoming essential travel and evaluate other options, such as postponing, cancelling or participating virtually.
- Employees who may be at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. older employees and those with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease) are restricted from travelling at this time.

## While travelling:

- Wash your hands regularly and stay at least one meter away from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Contact your Immediate Manager if you feel ill while travelling. The company will make necessary arrangements to bring you back home safely.
- You should comply with instructions from local authorities where you are traveling. If, for example, you are told by local authorities not to go somewhere you should comply with this. You should comply with any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings.

## Returning from travel:

- If you have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading, you should monitor yourself for symptoms for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day.
- If you develop even a mild cough or low grade fever (i.e. a temperature of 37.3 C or more) you should stay at home and self-isolate. This means avoiding close contact (one meter or nearer) with other people, including family members. You should also telephone their healthcare provider or the local public health department, giving them details of your recent travel and symptoms. Also inform your Immediate Manager.

# **HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OFF A MASK?**

**Remember, a mask should only be used if absolutely necessary.**

1. Before touching the mask, clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
2. Take the mask and inspect it for tears or holes.
3. Orient which side is the top side (where the metal strip is).
4. Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards (the coloured side).
5. Place the mask to your face. Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it moulds to the shape of your nose.
6. Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and your chin.
7. After use, take off the mask; remove the elastic loops from behind the ears while keeping the mask away from your face and clothes, to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
8. Discard the mask in a closed bin immediately after use.
9. Perform hand hygiene after touching or discarding the mask - Use alcohol-based hand rub or, if visibly soiled, wash your hands with soap and water.

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **1) What is a coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

## **2) What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

## **3) What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

## **4) How does COVID-19 spread?**

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

## **5) Who is at risk of developing severe illness?**

While we are still learning about how COVID-2019 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **6) Should I wear a mask to protect myself?**

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face mask can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask. The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are to frequently clean your hands, cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue and maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

### **7) How long does the virus survive on surfaces?**

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with simple disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others. Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

### **8) Is COVID-19 airborne?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air. They quickly fall on floors or surfaces. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within 1 metre of a person who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands.

### **9) Is it safe to receive a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported?**

Yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.

### **10) How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?**

The “incubation period” means the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **11) What alternatives do I have if there are no hand sanitisers available? Can I use other alcohol like ethyl or liquor?**

If hand sanitisers are not available, hand washing with soap and water is the recommended, and even better, alternative. Liquor is not effective against coronavirus. For an alcohol-based hand rub to be effective, it must have an alcohol content of 60% to 95%.

### **12) Can I catch the virus from being in my workplace in close proximity to someone who doesn't have respiratory symptoms?**

Since the virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets, the risk of catching it from somebody who is asymptomatic, even a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, is low. However, in light of the pandemic, everyone should maintain social distancing, which means keeping at least 1 meter away from others, avoiding mass gatherings and areas with large numbers of people, and practicing frequent hand washing and hand sanitising according to the recommendation.

### **13) Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?**

No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhoea have also been reported. It's not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs.

### **14) How do I know if it is COVID-19 or just the common flu?**

A COVID-19 infection has the same signs and symptoms as the common cold and you can only differentiate them through laboratory testing to determine the virus type. If you have similar symptoms, please contact the local healthcare provider immediately for evaluation.

### **15) Can disinfectant sprays or wipes be used on my skin to prevent spread of COVID-19?**

No. Always follow the instructions on household cleaners. Do not use disinfect sprays or wipes on your skin because it may cause skin and eye irritation. Disinfectant sprays or wipes are not intended for use on humans or animals. Disinfectant sprays or wipes are intended for use on hard, non-porous surfaces.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are working in one of our Kerala Factory or Office, please use the contact information below:

Central Helpline Tollfree	1075
Central Helpline Number	+91 11 23978043
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If you are working in one of our Tamil Nadu Factory or Office, please use the contact information below:

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