Protecting Workers from 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Understandably, workers and employers are concerned about the evolving coronavirus outbreak first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The information below provides links to interim guidance and other resources for preventing exposures to, and infections with, 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The US Department of Labor/OSHA has a webpage and will continue to update its 2019 Novel Coronavirus webpage as more information emerges.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus has resulted in confirmed human infections in China, including cases outside Wuhan City. Additional cases have been identified in a growing number of other international locations, including the United States.

There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with 2019-nCoV as the outbreak investigation continues. Based on how other similar viruses spread, infected people may be able to spread the 2019-nCoV through their respiratory secretions, especially when they cough or sneeze. Previous outbreaks of coronavirus have been associated with spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection.

There is no evidence of ongoing transmission of 2019-nCoV in the United States at this time. Without sustained human-to-human transmission, most American workers are not at significant risk of infection. However, workers involved in healthcare (including clinical laboratory personnel), airline operations (including cabin crewmembers) and border protection may have exposure to travelers infected with the virus in China or other affected areas. Business travelers from the United States who visit areas abroad where the virus is spreading may also be at some risk of exposure.

The following websites can be consulted to protect workers in some of these higher risk occupations from exposure to 2019-nCoV.

**Healthcare workers:** Until more is known about how the 2019-nCoV spreads, CDC and OSHA recommend using a combination of standard, contact, and airborne precautions (including wearing gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 or better respirators, and eye/face protection) to protect workers with exposure to the virus. For additional information, consult: the CDC or the World Health Organization (WHO) webpages for interim guidance on infection prevention and control recommendations for patients with known or patients under investigation for 2019-nCoV in a Healthcare Setting.

**Clinical laboratory workers:** Consult the CDC’s webpage for interim laboratory biosafety guidelines for handling specimens associated with 2019-nCoV infection.

**Airline Workers:** Consult OSHA’s webpage for airline worker infection prevention and control recommendations.

For more information, contact Anne Bracker (860) 263-6920 or Ken Tucker (860) 263-6929 at CONN-OSHA

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**It’s flu season. You should take simple precautions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These precautions apply to all respiratory viruses including the 2019-nCoV**

- Stay home when you are sick. If you have flu-like symptoms, and in particular fever, don’t go to work.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.