

# TOSHA HAZARD ALERT



## COVID-19 National Emphasis Program

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### What is COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease that is spread from person to person through particles produced when an infected person exhales, talks, vocalizes, sneezes, or coughs. Although most people who have COVID-19 have mild symptoms, COVID-19 can also cause severe illness and even death.

### National Emphasis Program – Who is Affected

National Emphasis Program (NEP)—Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), DIR 2021-01 (CPL-03) describes policies and procedures for implementing a NEP to ensure that employees in high hazard industries or work tasks are protected from the hazard of contracting SARS-CoV-2, the cause of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The NEP uses existing standards to address the COVID-19 hazard, **it is not a new rule or standard.**

Appendix A and B lists industries with the highest anticipated exposures. This list includes and is not limited to:

- Medical offices, including dentists
- Hospitals, ambulance services, surgery centers, skilled and residential care facilities
- Meat slaughtering and packing including poultry
- Retail and restaurant establishments
- Staffing and warehousing operations
- Corrections
- Manufacturing identified as essential during the pandemic
- Construction

And others, again this is not an exhaustive list. Please see the appendices for further guidance.

### Protection Measures

- Train employees about steps they can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- Employees should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue when

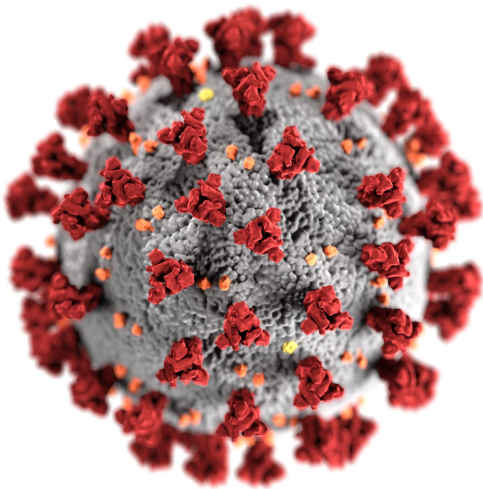
coughing or sneezing, or use the inside of the elbow

- Discard of used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water
- Place posters at the entrance to workplaces and other visible areas which encourage hand hygiene
- Provide alcohol-based hand rubs with at least 60% alcohol at convenient locations throughout the work area
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects such as workstations, keyboards, handrails, doorknobs, etc. To disinfect, use products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface. Provide disinfectant wipes in near proximity to commonly used surfaces
- Minimize sharing of tools/equipment when possible
- Allow employees to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent spread of the virus
- Increase ventilation rates provided by HVAC system, increase percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system and install high efficiency air filters
- Space employees approximately 6 feet or 2 meters apart when possible
- Provide services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or internet)
- Temporarily move/reposition workstations
- When possible have employees telework

- Stagger shifts to limit number of employees on site
- Increase physical distance between employees and customers by installing partitions/drive through
- Encourage visitors, customers, etc. to wear face coverings inside businesses
- Consider conducting daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., symptom and temperature screening) of employees before they enter the facility
- Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns

## What Existing OSHA Standards Apply

- The General Duty Clause which requires employers to furnish to each worker “employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.”
- The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards requiring the use of gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection for specific job tasks.
- The Sanitation standards which require employers provide soap, hot and cold (or tepid) water, and individual towels/air blowers be made available in the workplace. The employer is required to permit employees to utilize toilet facilities as needed. In addition, it requires that all workplaces be kept clean to the extent that the nature of the work allows.



## How Can TOSHA Help

*Consultative Services is a program offered to employers, especially smaller employers, to assist them in achieving a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. Consultative Services offers both occupational safety and industrial hygiene services to manufacturing, construction, and other types of businesses in Tennessee. A company's participation in the program is confidential, and no information about the company is used in compliance enforcement. Onsite and virtual opportunities are available to help develop and/or enhance your safety and health programs. Click [here](#) or search TOSHA Consultation Request Form*

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