



KEEPING A SAFE WORKPLACE

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Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

Executive Summary

- Given the available epidemiological data with concerning rising cases of COVID-19, employers have a crucial role to play to ensure that employees who must come to work are operating in a safe environment
- Employers should adopt practices to make workplaces as safe as possible
- Work should be completed remotely unless it is strictly necessary for an employee to be in person to complete their job duties

Current COVID-19 Conditions

Michigan is facing a significant resurgence of COVID-19. The state currently has a daily case rate of 261 cases per million people, which is more than double from one month ago. Percent positivity is at 7.5%. Trends for both metrics have been increasing for over a month and a half. Hospitalization trends, which tend to appear two to four weeks after cases, have been rising over the past five weeks.

Currently, there are 28 documented COVID-19 outbreaks in an office setting and the number of new outbreaks reported continue to increase week after week. Office settings make up 5% of all documented outbreaks, and 7% of new outbreaks identified in the last week. Additionally, 8.3% of current outbreaks are in manufacturing and construction and 33% of those were first identified in the last week.

It is clear that there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 at this time. The best mitigation we have to prevent further spread is to promote physical distancing.

Creating a safe work environment

Consistent with emergency rules promulgated by the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity on October 14, 2020, if any in-person work is being conducted, employers should be sure to take the following steps to protect the health of their employees:

- **Create a COVID preparedness plan** – Employers should develop and implement a written plan to prevent employee exposure to COVID-19. This should include exposure determination and detail the measures the employer will implement to reduce employee exposure
- **Establish clear workplace procedures** – Employers should identify a workplace COVID-19 coordinator, mandate face coverings, ensure appropriate access to personal protective equipment (where necessary), and train employees on new procedures (e.g., to facilitate physical distancing)
- **Conduct daily self-screening of staff working in person** – Employers should conduct daily health evaluations that include assessment for the symptoms of COVID-19, and exclude from in-person work any symptomatic staff
- **Strengthen workplace cleaning and disinfection procedures** – Employers should take every opportunity to clean and disinfect facilities as frequently as possible, and enhanced cleaning should be performed if a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19
- **Collaborate with Local Health Departments** – If employees contract COVID-19, Local Health Departments will conduct contact tracing. Employees should work closely with their Local Health Departments to ensure that all potentially affected employees are made aware of their exposure

Work from home when possible

The responsibility to maintain a safe workplace is paramount, and strongly suggests that employers should allow their employees to work from home if possible. In order to minimize the presence of individuals gathered in work settings where COVID-19 may spread, employers should only permit in-person work when attendance is strictly required to perform job duties.

A “strict requirement” for in-person work means that a worker is unable to physically complete required job tasks from a remote setting (e.g., like a food service or auto assembly worker, or a job involving protected data that cannot be accessed remotely). It should not be construed as permitting in-person work solely because working remotely may result in decreased productivity or efficiency (i.e., because an employee may be more effective / efficient in person) or because of there may be additional costs related to performing work remotely (i.e., costs for equipment like laptops, VPNs, software licenses).¹

A steady rise in epidemic spread, including positive cases and hospitalizations, constitutes a serious threat to public health, including to employees in the workplace. In order to restore the safety of

¹ Given the unique local character of school governance and the school-specific infection control plans already developed by school districts and local health departments, this guidance would not supersede local decisions about virtual versus in-person schooling; a decision to move to virtual schooling should be made by school districts in conjunction with their local health departments.

workplaces across Michigan, workplaces that can do so must temporarily ensure that employees work from home when possible.

For a full list of additional resources on employee and workplace safety, please visit

<https://www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-100207---,00.html>.

For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus).

You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 or email COVID-19@michigan.gov.



For more information, visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus).