



## Guidance on Coronavirus for Educational Institutions

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people, such as with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) began spreading person to person in China and, more recently, in countries outside China, including the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a document titled **Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019), February 2020** to help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-2019, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance recommends actions employers can take now and provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-2019. The interim guidance is based on what is currently known about COVID-2019. The CDC will update this interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has also developed a **COVID-19 resource webpage** which provides information for workers and employers about the evolving coronavirus outbreak. The information includes links to interim guidance and other resources for preventing exposures to, and infections with, COVID-2019.

### Hygiene Etiquette

Hygiene etiquette involves practices that prevent the spread of illness and disease. A critical time to practice good hygiene etiquette is when you are sick, especially when coughing or sneezing. Serious respiratory illnesses are easily spread by:

- Coughing or sneezing
- Touching your face after touching contaminated objects
- Unclean hands
- Touching objects after contaminating your hands

### To help stop the spread of germs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in a waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are ill, try to distance yourself from others so you do not spread your germs.

### General Best Practices

#### To help control the potential spread of COVID-19:

- Staff, students, volunteers and others who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should stay home until they are symptom free, pursuant to CDC and state/local health department recommendations. This practice should be actively encouraged by the school.

- Make tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles available for use.
- Provide hand-washing facilities. If soap and water are unavailable, make alcohol-based hand sanitizers available.
- The CDC recommends routinely cleaning all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, desks, countertops, and doorknobs.
- Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. They do not recommend additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, desks, computer keyboards/mouse) can be wiped down before each use.

## Travel Considerations

Effective March 1, 2020, the CDC is recommending that institutes of higher education consider postponing or canceling exchange programs and consider asking current participants to return home. All schools should consider this travel recommendation, and those of their state/local health department, and review their exchange travel program plans. Schools should also consult with their attorney to evaluate any legal consequences.

## Planning

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the CDC developed a checklist to assist educational agencies in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. While specific to an influenza pandemic, the checklist provides general planning guidance that can be used by schools to evaluate their readiness to respond to a COVID-19 outbreak. [HHS/CDC Planning Checklist](#).

Finally, the COVID-19 outbreak is an evolving situation, with continuously updated information/guidance. Schools should consult the CDC and their state health and education departments for the most up-to-date planning and response information.

## For more information visit:

- U.S. Department of State [Travel Information](#)
- CDC [Travel Information](#)
- CDC [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Page](#)
- OSHA [COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) [Coronavirus-2019 Page](#)
- CDC [Good Health Habits for Preventing Seasonal Flu](#) page

*The information contained in this publication has been developed from sources believed to be reliable. It is an insurance risk management tool, provided with the understanding that the member insurance companies of the Utica National Insurance Group are not providing legal advice, or any other professional services or advice. Utica National shall have no liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damages alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the use of this information. You are encouraged to consult an attorney or other professional for advice on these issues.*

© 2020 by the Utica Mutual Insurance Company, all rights reserved.



Utica Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliated companies, New Hartford, NY 13413  
www.uticanational.com • 1.800.598.8422