

2019-nCoV: Guidance for Organizations

What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is a new respiratory virus identified in December 2019 as the cause of an outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. People who get sick with 2019-nCoV develop mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Illness can begin 2 to 14 days after an exposure. Although this virus likely emerged from an animal source, it can also spread from person-to-person. Spread from one person to another is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Typically, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic.

The latest situation summary updates, including the number of cases identified in the United States, are available on CDC's web page [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China](#).

What is the health risk from 2019-nCoV in Chicago?

Currently, the health risk to the general public from 2019-nCoV remains low, both in the U.S. and in Chicago. The goal of the ongoing U.S. public health response is to detect new cases quickly and prevent community spread of 2019-nCoV. The coming days and weeks are likely to bring more confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in the U.S. and globally, but strong public health measures now may blunt the impact of the virus.

What special precautions do organizations in Chicago need to take?

Due to recent acceleration of 2019-nCoV transmission across China and in accordance with current federal guidance, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends the following:

- **Any employee/member of your organization returning from mainland China on or after February 3, 2020 should not attend school or work for 14 days after the return date.** Absences for this purpose should be excused and alternate arrangements should be made for teleworking, online meetings and school assignments.
- **Employees/members of your organization who returned from mainland China prior to February 3, 2020 can remain in school and work.** Anyone who develops respiratory symptoms including fever, cough and difficulty breathing 14 days after returning from mainland China, should seek medical care right away. Call ahead before taking them to a doctor's office or emergency department to prevent any potential spread. Medical personnel should immediately notify CDPH by calling **312-746-SICK (7425)** Monday through Friday during business hours or **311** during evenings, weekends, and holidays.

The situation is rapidly changing and we are monitoring it closely. Guidance will be updated as needed.

What are the latest public health measures?

As airport screening procedures have changed, starting February 3, 2020, CDPH began receiving information on incoming travelers from all of China who may be at risk, and when appropriate instructing them to stay home from school and work, and monitoring them remotely. CDPH will be in communication with organizations about individual situations as needed.

How should business, community, faith-based and other organizations prepare for the potential of coronavirus in their community?

- Instruct all members and staff who have traveled to China in the past 14 days and are experiencing symptoms to immediately seek medical care.
- Members and staff with respiratory symptoms should be managed in accordance with the CDPH Outpatient Checklist available at www.chicagohan.org/2019-nCoV.
- Report any ill employees/members of your organization with a travel history to CDPH immediately.
- Ensure employees/members of your organization who may need to be quarantined or isolated and cannot return to their home have housing and basic needs.
- Develop a plan for outbreak response and share with stakeholders.
- Create an emergency communication plan and maintain up-to-date contact information for everyone in your communication chain.
- Establish leadership team, identify essential staff functions, and assign tasks and responsibilities.
- Plan workshops and trainings to educate staff and members on prevention services.

Do events need to be cancelled?

At this time, there is no need to cancel business, religious, community or other social events. However, as with any respiratory virus, employees and other members of your organization should stay home and avoid events when they are ill.

What If we have an employee who has been ill at work and is now a person under investigation (PUI)?

CDPH will follow up with businesses and organizations who need more specific guidance.

Should we be concerned about pets or other animals and 2019-nCoV?

CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both live and dead, but there is no reason to think that any animals or pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus.

One of our employees/members of our organization is from China. Can they return home?

CDPH recommends **avoiding travel to China**. The latest travel updates are available on CDC's web page [Traveler's Health](#).

How can businesses and organizations prevent infections with 2019-nCoV and other respiratory diseases?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. As with any respiratory virus, you can **protect yourself and others** by taking everyday common sense actions:

- 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 sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Remember that it's currently flu season and CDPH **recommends** getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed. CDPH **does NOT** recommend the use of masks or gloves.

Are any special cleaning procedures needed?

At this time, no special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning are necessary or recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Business, community, faith-based and other organizations should follow standard processes for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. General infection control guidance is available at www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol.

What should medical personnel do to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

Medical personnel should refer to the outpatient office guidance on www.chicagohan.org/2019-nCoV. If an employee/member of your organization calls ahead with travel to China within the last 14 days and concerning symptoms, collect detailed history over the phone prior to deciding the location for triage. You may call **312-746-SICK (7425)** or **311** for consultation.

For more information, please visit www.chicago.gov/2019-nCoV or www.cdc.gov/coronavirus, email coronavirus@chicago.gov, or call **312-746-4835**.