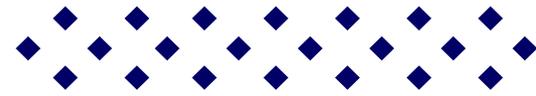


EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESSES: MOVING FORWARD WITH COVID-19



COVID-19 can still cause you, your employees, and your customers to get sick. Even though more Americans are vaccinated and boosted, it is still possible to catch COVID-19 and spread it to others—even when cases in Wisconsin are lower than in the past.

Infectious disease outbreaks are bad for business.

- COVID-19 has resulted in high levels of absenteeism.¹
- Lost time is lost money. The insurance-based Integrated Benefits Institute estimated that lost work time has cost Wisconsin \$2.5 billion.²



Workers who feel safe and respected are good for business.

- Show your employees you appreciate them! It's a good idea to offer benefits and additional flexibility, especially during the pandemic.
- Remember that some people face more risk for severe illness than others.



You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at your business:

- **Open doors and windows** when possible to improve air circulation.
- Encourage sick workers and unvaccinated workers who have been exposed to COVID-19 to **stay home to avoid getting others sick.**³
- **Consider providing paid sick leave** so infectious workers are not tempted to stay at work.
- **Encourage exposed workers to wear masks during their infectious period.**³
- **Allow all workers and customers to wear masks if they choose.** While not required, they are an inexpensive and highly effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- **Encourage your employees to get their COVID-19 vaccinations.**
- **Report to your local health department or tribal health center** when an employee gets sick.³

Flip for more info!

You don't have to do it alone.

- Your local health department or tribal health center can provide you and your employees resources on testing, vaccination, masks, and help with contact tracing.
- See DHS's *Preventing and Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in the Workplace, P-02787* (available in English, Spanish, and Hmong) at dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02787.htm for checklists and resources on preventing and addressing COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace.
- WisCON offers employer trainings, consultation, and tools on how to protect your workforce from COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Visit slh.wisc.edu/occupational/wiscon/ to learn more.
- Visit commit2care.org for free resources for businesses to safeguard their employees and pledge to C.A.R.E. for their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.



COVID-19 will likely come and go for a while.

- While no one is certain what will happen in the future, it is likely that COVID-19 will continue to go through periods of rising and falling.
- Leaning to the side of caution is a smart business practice, especially during periods of high COVID-19 activity.
- Use the CDC COVID-19 County Check to see what prevention steps you should take based on your community's COVID-19 level. Learn more at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html.

More information

The primary point of contact for questions regarding a COVID-19 outbreak at your business should be the local and tribal health department (LTHD). Contact information can be found through the following links:

For more information:

- Local Public Health Departments and Tribal Health Centers: dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts
- DHS COVID-19: Business, Employers, and Workers web page: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/employers.htm

Email questions/concerns to DHS:

DHSCVIDOCHEALTH@dhs.wisconsin.gov

DHSCDESOutbreaks@dhs.wisconsin.gov

References

- ¹Groenewold MR, et al. *Increases in Health-Related Workplace Absenteeism Among Workers in Essential Critical Infrastructure Occupations During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, March–April 2020*. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:853–858. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6927a1>
- ²Integrated Benefits Institute. *Employee covid-19 cases: U.S. counties, 4/12/2022*, accessed 19 April 2022, <<https://files.ibiweb.org/uploads/general/ibi-Employee-COVID-19-Cases.html>>.
- ³See *Preventing and Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in the Workplace* for further guidance on quarantine, isolation, mask wearing, and reporting COVID-19 cases.

