

EMERGENCY PREVENTION MEASURES FOR MANUFACTURING FACILITIES AS RELATED TO COVID-19

PREFACE

In order to manage COVID-19 risks for employees, it is critical for manufacturing facilities to review their policies and procedures relative to current knowledge of the risks. The following guidance is based on our current understanding of the virus and designed to help companies review and amend their policies. As updates become available, this information may change.

Ultimately, each facility will need to implement policies tailored to their specific facilities and any risks relevant to their employees or those that they may encounter during work time. Social distancing by staying six feet away from others is considered a workplace best practice with a strong recommendation to make the most of telecommuting options for as many employees as possible.

Additionally, employers should conduct a Risk Assessment of their facilities to determine whether Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls, or Personal Protective measures are recommended based on the work areas within their facility or each employees risk of exposure due to the nature of their job functions.

Manufacturer's Edge can help with an on-site assessment followed by recommendations for risk remediations using workplace controls. Completed audit summaries document individual risk levels found within each facility and provide recommendations for specific workplace controls. In manufacturing environments, the potential for close contact can occur on or near production lines, receiving and packaging areas, sampling and quality rooms, and in common facility areas such as conference rooms, lunchrooms, locker rooms, restrooms, hallways, and entryways.

The high-level steps for site compliance with the workplace controls recommended herein are:



This Guidance is Intended to Assist in Developing More Site-Specific Plans

Each employer needs to consider how to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace. Manufacturer's Edge recommends that employers identify safe work procedures to be implemented at their facilities from the following Best Practices and Housekeeping Recommendations.

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Avoid Close Contact

Limiting person to person contact/proximity inside the workplace is critically important. Scientific and epidemiological evidence strongly suggests that good personal hygiene practices, including proper hand washing, is critical and likely the difference between maintaining a safe environment and someone potentially getting infected. Close contact with another individual is defined as being within 6 feet for a prolonged period of time or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case or those who may be affected (e.g., being coughed on, sneezed on or physically touching an infected person or surface). Walking past, someone is unlikely to constitute “close contact.”

It is essential to understand that when someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales, they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by both breathing in these droplets of infected fluid or by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

NOTE: Local and statewide ordinances and orders may contain alternate definitions. Be sure to consult any orders from local authorities.

Create Social Distancing in the Workplace

- ✓ Place employees at least 6 feet away from each other. When possible do not have in-person meetings. Do not allow personal contact (e.g., handshakes, hugs, fist bumps or high fives, etc.)
- ✓ If you must have an in-person meeting, meet in a large room and be at least 6 feet from one another.
- ✓ Keep the meeting as short as possible.
- ✓ Close lunchrooms and limit access to areas where people gather.
- ✓ Limit visitors and those that are allowed should be briefed on the procedures in place and instructed to inform you if they begin to have symptoms within the next 14 days. Record all visitors in a log so that they can be contacted if an outbreak should happen.

Practice Good Health Habits

- ✓ Place posters around your building that support staying home when sick, how to cough and sneeze, and keeping hands clean. Put them up in places where people will see them.
- ✓ Make sure you have tissues and trash cans throughout the building.
- ✓ Have everyone wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not around, clean hands with a hand gel that has at least 60% alcohol in it, make sure these supplies are always available to employees in multiple locations.
- ✓ Wear recommended face masks, respirators, or face shields when needed.
- ✓ Provide gloves when requested or when staff clean surfaces, rooms, and any areas where people have access.
- ✓ Tell everyone not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ✓ Visit coughing and sneezing and hand washing web pages for more information.

Entrances, Hallways, and Common Spaces and Personnel Movement in the Facility

- ✓ Depending on the area of a hallway or entryway, limit the number of persons to maintain physical distances as employees wait to come in or exit, move from room to room
- ✓ Find ways to minimize common surfaces employees need to touch—e.g.,
 - Auto open doors or encourage bumping doors open with hip or using foot on kick plate
 - Remove the door closure where possible and keep doors open to allow employees to move between doorways without touching knobs where it does not impact safety.
 - Alternatively, foot pulls may also be added to doors with frequent traffic
- ✓ Propping interior doors to each office open whenever possible to improve air turnover in the building and decrease touching of knobs/handles
- ✓ Minimize hallway conversations and interactions

Employee Clocking In/Out Practices

- ✓ Consider having every employee's temperature recorded upon daily entry to the facility. Employees with a cough or temperature of over 99 °F (37.3C) needs to be sent home. They should also stay home (or work from home) if they have had to take simple medications, such as paracetamol/acetaminophen, Ibuprofen or aspirin, which may mask symptoms of infection or fever.

Note: Employees being sent home should understand that this time off may be counted as sick leave.

- ✓ Consider 6-foot block spacing if a time clock is in use.
- ✓ Many time clocks have web-based features that can be operated through phone apps.
- ✓ Alternatively, consider other inexpensive apps employees could use to track time and submit to supervisors.
- ✓ Use phones to clock in/out or provide additional sanitizer near the time clock.
- ✓ Consider if a supervisor can use a camera from another room to clock employees in/out.
- ✓ Consider if clocking in/out can be handled by journal entry afterward.

Locker Rooms and Entering/Exiting Production Floor

- ✓ Clean and laundered clothing is not considered a transfer vector for COVID-19.
- ✓ To maintain uniform cleanliness and healthy employees, as best as possible, employees must enter the uniform area with clean hands.
- ✓ Touching non-selected uniform clothing and hangers should be kept to a minimum.
- ✓ Once the uniform is selected, place the now empty hanger on a different rack to avoid the hanger touching clean uniforms and from other employees handling the previously touched hook.
- ✓ Keep soiled uniforms separate from clean uniforms.
- ✓ Frequent and proper hand washing and handling clean materials with clean hands is the best precautionary measure.

Common Tools

- ✓ Human-machine interfaces such as keyboards, buttons, etc. should be sanitized between users.
- ✓ Standard tools like brooms, rakes, scrapers, or hand tools should be sanitized after each use, especially between two separate users.
- ✓ Provide personal pens/sharpeners, alternatively sanitize them at least once per shift.
- ✓ Identify areas where employees frequently interact so intra-person sanitation procedures can be developed.

Shift Change Risks

- ✓ Stagger days, shifts, shift changes, breaks, and lunches to avoid grouping.
- ✓ Identify individuals that do not need to come into the production restrooms and do not need to be using the same resources as the larger number of employees. Separate all teams into smaller groups and isolate them to separate bathrooms and break areas as possible.
- ✓ Order porta-potties with sinks and provide outside tables for additional break areas.
- ✓ Consider ordering them for Truck Drivers, Shipping/Receiving Team(s), Maintenance Team,.etc.
- ✓ Drivers should use their pen to sign documents.
- ✓ Make sure to include a regular sanitation schedule between and during shifts.
- ✓ With some employees working remotely, determine if any office spaces can be re-purposed for segregated lunch/ changing areas.
- ✓ Use video apps or phone calls to prevent face to face contact during shift change.
- ✓ Use texting, chats, free conference calling to bring teams together remotely.
- ✓ Develop a protocol for the exchange of material, documentation, product samples, etc. to ensure sanitation steps are in place.
- ✓ Limit the exchange of files and paperwork to a minimum and avoid close contact.
- ✓ Develop a protocol for any physical sign-off requirements to avoid close contact, limit the common use of writing instruments.

Meals/Snacks/Break Room Activities

- ✓ Expand and stagger breaks and mealtimes for groups of employees to reduce the numbers of employees in break areas/cafeterias at any one time.
- ✓ Frequently, employers provide pizza or buffet-style meals, or employees do potlucks. Shift from communal provisions to single serve options. Or have a single trained employee serve employees in an enclosed area rather than having multiple employees taking food from a standard container/with utensils being touched by numerous people.
- ✓ Consider using other conference rooms or separation space (rent tents) to distance employees.

- ✓ Intensify sanitation of refrigerator handles/sinks and faucets/kitchenette areas.
- ✓ Microwave handles and buttons should be sanitized after each use.
- ✓ Have sanitizing wipes and soap readily available in lunch and breakrooms and clean facilities after each break.

Engineering Controls

- ✓ Evaluate ventilation and UV filters with a higher MERV rating.
- ✓ Increase ventilation rates.
- ✓ Evaluate separation surfaces to prevent cross-communication of breathing air.
- ✓ Consider implementing barriers to ensure 6 feet minimum separation.
- ✓ Office/Clerical Work
- ✓ Train all employees to avoid touching one's face without ensuring hands are sanitized. (aids such as face masks/shields, gloves, or other physical precautions are advised if the role of the employee produces extended time/risk of this occurring.)
- ✓ One person could be designated to get documents and scan these documents. Take precautions with gloves, washing hands, and sanitizing surfaces.
- ✓ When possible, create walk-up windows or clear plastic barriers for employees looking for Human Resources or other management or admin assistance.
- ✓ Separate and segregate office staff, ideally limiting offices to only one person per office space if required on-site and follow 6-foot distancing practice.
- ✓ Consider precautions such as gloves and sanitizers for those persons that go to the post office or bank based on the extent of community transfer and the assessment of risk.
- ✓ If work items need to be delivered to quarantined employee homes, set up a system and train to avoid inadvertent contact (e.g., leaving on a doorstep, putting in someone's open trunk).

Cleaning Laundry

For clothes that come in contact or potentially in contact with virus particles and sick individuals, the use of conventional detergents at the warmest temperatures are recommended.

Wash items according to manufacturer's instructions
Use the warmest setting and dry items completely

NOTE: Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an unwell person can not be washed with other peoples' things.

For persons engaged in cleaning:

Do not shake dirty laundry - this minimizes the possibility of dispersing virus in the air.

NOTE: Proper ventilation in these areas is a critical engineering control.

- ✓ Clean and disinfect anything used for transporting laundry with typical cleaning products.
- ✓ Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items.
- ✓ Wash hands immediately after removing gloves or after handling dirty items.

Stream-line Quality Assurance Monitoring Activities

- ✓ Consider whether areas that are typically staffed but have infrequent interaction can be monitored via camera.
- ✓ If there are checks that will bring someone in close contact with another employee or there are resource constraints, consider if there are checks that can be done less frequently, e.g. every 4 hours instead of hourly or other variables that can be monitored remotely.

Facility-wide Communication and Employee Support, Training and Resources

- ✓ Provide specific instructions about illness reporting methods relative to COVID-19.
- ✓ Plant leadership should observe and model proper hand washing practices while reinforcing the importance of cleanliness to employees entering the plant.
- ✓ Provide online or remote training sessions for office staff to help with the transition to remote work.
- ✓ Remind managers to watch for employees who may be struggling in these stressful times.

- ✓ Add extra capacity to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) helplines and remind employees about this resource and their services.
- ✓ Provide refresher training for employees on proper hand washing, employee illness reporting, etc. and any other procedural changes the company has implemented to address COVID-19.
- ✓ Train employees how to recognize areas or practices which pose a risk for spreading the virus and define a process to quickly review and provide mitigation strategies in these areas.
- ✓ Consider the use of electronic communication devices such as wireless headphones, for loud/ noisy areas, and walkie-talkies for less noisy areas; these may help employees communicate in production areas, but still, maintain safe distancing. These can be useful for cross-training and training new employees. Provide resources to evaluate compliance.

Additional Considerations

- ✓ Minimize employee interaction with personal items.
- ✓ Limit non-essential visitors from entering the facility; this includes other employees that are usually stationed at a different location.
- ✓ Cybersecurity provision should be considered for each data access point via web, phone, or other electronic interfaces outside of each facilities firewall protection. Manufacturer's Edge can help assess your risks of exposure.
- ✓ Limit traffic between work areas and buildings that are non-business essential.
- ✓ Train all visitors on the new COVID-19 related procedures.
- ✓ Determine if scheduled audits can be postponed.
- ✓ Examples of physical distancing signs for manufacturers may be available from third parties.

Manufacturer's Edge has been working with the manufacturing community, the state of Colorado, and our Manufacturing Extension Partnership National Network to establish best practices for maintaining a safe and clean environment as people go back to work. We have also developed a number of resources and programs designed to customize your company's response to the covid-19 crisis. We want to do our part to provide a safe work space and will provide some support free of charge, as well as assist you by leveraging alternative sources of funding for complex issues. Please contact your regional director to find out how we can help.

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Sources:

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