

Risk Management Bulletin

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Volume 2 | Issue 14



Coronavirus Disease 2019 *As of February 25, 2020*

THE INFORMATION BELOW IS CURRENT AS OF FEBRUARY 25, 2020

This issue has been a relatively fast presenting illness that has been steeped in mystery, and questions due to where it generated from.

China has not been the most forthcoming with information, and what little has come out may not be the most reliable due to the nature of the country's policies. Given this reality, we wanted to put some information out from our country's most reliable and qualified entities; the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or better known as the CDC. This organization's mission is to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S. The CDC conducts critical science and provides health information that protects our nation against expensive and dangerous health threats, and the information they provide is some of the most reliable out there. Therefore, the information provided below is directly from their website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

We have culled the most important information, and presented it here, but if you require more, please look to their website. This will help you make the best decisions possible for your organization and your people.

NOTE: THIS IS AN EMERGING, RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION AND CDC WILL PROVIDE UPDATED INFORMATION AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE, IN ADDITION TO UPDATED GUIDANCE.



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CDC Recommends

While the immediate risk of this new virus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, everyone can do their part to help us respond to this emerging public health threat:

1. It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.
2. If you are a healthcare provider, be on the look-out for people who recently traveled from China and have fever and respiratory symptoms.
3. If you are a healthcare provider caring for a COVID-19 patient or a public health responder, please take care of yourself and follow recommended infection control procedures.
4. If you have been in China or have been exposed to someone sick with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you will face some limitations on your movement and activity. Please follow instructions during this time. Your cooperation is integral to the ongoing public health response to try to slow spread of this virus.
5. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, contact your healthcare provider, and tell them about your symptoms and your travel or exposure to a COVID-19 patient.

FOR COVID-19 TO BE A WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM:

The etiology of the exposure must come from the work environment

- Employee is exposed to a confirmed coronavirus carrier at work.
- Employee has traveled overseas to an infected area on business.
- Exposure must arise out of employment and occur within the course of employment (aoe/coe).

Workers' Compensation responds to injury not exposure

- Simply being exposed does not mean the employee is ill.
- After exposure, the employee should self-quarantine and, if illness symptoms ensue, employee should then seek medical treatment and at that point a workers' compensation claim should be filed.

Workers' Compensation is not preventative

- Workers' Compensation will not provide coverage for COVID-19 testing .
- If the employee tests positive for coronavirus after exposure to an infected person in the workplace, workers' compensation will cover all care once confirmed industrial.



Background

CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which has now been detected in 37 locations internationally, including cases in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC). On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

Source and Spread of the Virus

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in 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 MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus (named SARS-CoV-2).

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a betacoronavirus, like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. All three of these viruses have their origins in bats. The sequences from U.S. patients are similar to the one that China initially posted, suggesting a likely single, recent emergence of this virus from an animal reservoir.

ALL THREE OF THESE VIRUSES HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN BATS.

Early on, many of the patients in the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. Later, a growing number of patients reportedly did not have exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread. Person-to-person spread has been reported outside China, including in the United States and other locations. Chinese officials report that sustained person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in China. In addition, other destinations have apparent community spread, meaning some people have been infected who are not sure how or where they became infected. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses.



SITUATION IN U.S.

Imported cases of COVID-19 in travelers have been detected in the U.S.

Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 also has been seen among close contacts of returned travelers from Wuhan, but at this time, this virus is **NOT** currently spreading in the community in the United States.

Illness Severity

Both MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV have been known to cause severe illness in people. The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully understood. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild to severe, including illness resulting in death. Learn more about the symptoms associated with COVID-19.

There are ongoing investigations to learn more.

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Risk Assessment

Outbreaks of novel virus infections among people are always of public health concern. The risk from these outbreaks depends on characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people, the severity of resulting illness, and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus (for example, vaccine or treatment medications). The fact that this disease has caused illness, including illness resulting in death, and sustained person-to-person spread is concerning. These factors meet two of the criteria of a pandemic. As community spread is detected in more and more countries, the world moves closer toward meeting the third criteria, worldwide spread of the new virus.

The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the United States. But individual risk is dependent on exposure.

For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

Under current circumstances, certain people will have an increased risk of infection, for example healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 and other close contacts of persons with COVID-19. CDC has developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.

However, it's important to note that current global circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will cause a pandemic. In that case, the risk assessment would be different.

CDC Response

Global efforts at this time are focused concurrently on containing spread of this virus and mitigating the impact of this virus. The federal government is working closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, as well as public health partners, to respond to this public health threat.

The public health response is multi-layered, with the goal of detecting and minimizing introductions of this virus in the United States so as to reduce the spread and the impact of this virus. CDC is operationalizing all of its pandemic preparedness and response plans, working on multiple fronts to meet these goals, including specific measures to prepare communities to respond local transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

There is an abundance of pandemic guidance developed in anticipation of an influenza pandemic that is being repurposed and adapted for a COVID-19 pandemic.



KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

And help stop the spread of rumors.

1

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

2

The risk of getting COVID-19 in the U.S. is currently low.

Some people who have traveled to places where many people have gotten sick with COVID-19 may be monitored by health officials to protect their health and the health of other people in the community.

3

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does NOT pose a risk of infection to other people.

4

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

Fever, Cough, Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you have traveled to China in the past 14 days and feel sick. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

5

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.