

# ***Catholic Mutual... "CARES"***

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## **Return to Work**

The following guidance is based on what is currently known about the coronavirus respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. You are strongly encouraged to coordinate your Return to Work process with the CDC and State/Local health officials so timely and accurate information can guide you to appropriate actions. Keep in mind though, your local conditions may influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community level strategies for returning employees to the workforce. Your procedures should focus on the prevention of any communicable illness so you maintain a healthy workforce when it comes time to return to usual work environments and routines. These preventative measures today are critical so we need to ensure your employees/volunteers practice the federal and state government's directives for proper hygiene. When beginning the return to work process, consider doing so in phases. Other items to consider:

- Employees who are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) should not report to work and should avoid contact with others. Employees who come to the office and appear ill should be sent home immediately. If employees have any concerns about COVID-19, advise them to seek medical advice for an evaluation. Furthermore, employees who have been sick should be fully recovered per medical advice before returning to work.
  - We recommend not requiring a doctor's note to validate the need for sick leave or returning to work.
  - Allow flexibility for employees who have sick family member(s) to care for or lack of childcare due to schools/daycares being closed.
- If an employee is known to be caring for an individual with symptoms of COVID-19, they too should not return to work until such care is completed and they are certain not to be infected with the illness.
- When considering your return to work, be aware that some employees may be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 such as persons with chronic medical conditions i.e., heart/lung disease, diabetes or other underlying conditions. Please consider special accommodations for members of this vulnerable population.

- All special accommodations must be in compliance with HIPAA rules pertaining to privacy. While you may need to accommodate such employees with these conditions, it is crucial that you maintain the confidentiality of their medical conditions.
- Social distancing is critical to maintaining a safe workplace. Employees should practice social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit. This may include use of telephone, email, etc. to communicate with fellow employees.
- There may be work activities where social distancing is a challenge therefore, consider limiting the duration of these activities or implementing the repositioning of workstations to create more distance and/or installing barriers (e.g., plexiglass shields), between workstations.
- Ensure employees have access to PPE, including disposable gloves and masks if needed. We recommend that facemasks be worn at all times.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched items regularly using the following CDC guidelines in this link: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC\\_2067-DM26911](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM26911)
  - Entry/exit ways into buildings, offices, rest rooms, classrooms, including doorknobs, handles, push plates
  - Drinking fountains
  - Restrooms: soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, locks/handles on stalls, grab bars, faucet handles, restroom partitions, toilets
  - Breakroom: counters, tabletops, refrigerator door handles, microwave door handles, faucet handles, light switches, coffee pot handles
  - Phones, copy machine, fax machines
  - Stair handrails
  - Elevator buttons
  - Light switches
- Provide workforce accessibility to sanitizers, disinfectant sprays/wipe which they can apply to surfaces they have touched throughout the office i.e., toilet handles, door knobs etc.
- If a 6' distance cannot be maintained in break/lunch rooms, consider removing a required number of tables/chairs to achieve this distance. To further your social distancing, you may have employees eat lunch at their desks/offices.
- If applicable, close any training/exercise rooms otherwise, it must be sterilized after each individual use. You may have to relocate equipment to maintain the recommended 6' social distance guideline.

- When it comes to occupying confined areas such as elevators (if applicable), limit the number of persons inside and request they wear face masks during this time. If this is an area frequently used, consider encouraging the utilization of stairwells. Be certain to keep the stairwells well ventilated.
- Your location may have a community room such as a work room with copy machines, fax, supplies, etc. Consider assigning the task of retrieving documents/supplies to one individual as to avoid numerous persons going in and out of this room.
- Send notice out to employees of any visitors/vendors in the building so they can adjust and limit their movement throughout the building(s).
- Display posters and reminders around the office/restrooms which reiterate infection control procedures following CDC guidelines to reduce the spread of illnesses:
  - Do not shake hands
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or apply hand sanitizer immediately after coming in contact with another person
  - Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or elbow, and immediately wash hands or apply sanitizer
  - Keep frequently touched areas clean i.e., telephones, computers, desktops etc.
  - Do not use other workers equipment i.e., stapler, notebooks, etc.
- Avoid all non-essential travel. If travel is necessitated, adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following any travel.
- Above all, connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the care or death of a loved one.

Stay up-to-date on governmental guidance from local, state and federal authorities. The following links may assist you with your Return to Work process.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf)

[ncov/community/pdf/Reopening\\_America\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf)

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/S](https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/SC-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf)

[C-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf](https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/SC-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf)

[https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/SC-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-](https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/SC-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf)

[Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf](https://www.sullcrom.com/files/upload/SC-Publication-COVID-19-Response-Return-to-Work-Considerations-for-Employers.pdf)

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fsummary.html)

[updates/summary.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fsummary.html)

[%2F2019-ncov%2Fsummary.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fsummary.html)

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Should you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact your Risk Management Representative.