Communicating COVID - The New Norm
Key Steps to Communicating
Be pro-active and have a PLAN

• What preventative measures will we take to protect our employees, customers and vendors. Mandatory masks, temperature screenings?

• Social Distancing & how that works in our environment

• Work at home options

• If someone experiences COVID related symptoms, how to respond

• If someone tests positive for COVID, how to respond to the employee and what to tell other employees
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Obligation of a Safe Work Environment

- **PPE:** If your workplace decides upon implementation of masks it should be viewed as REQUIRED or MANDATORY uniforms and/or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- **TIP:** Good time for policy review regarding the use of PPE. If you are in an environment where PPE was not previously required, then consider implementation of a policy to include expectations and consequences if not followed.
- **TIP:** Consistency is key! If you are going to implement a policy, ensure it is carried out consistently with everyone to avoid being discriminatory.
- **Disciplinary Action:** Is it okay if someone chooses not to wear a mask to write them up? Absolutely yes!
Employee Displays COVID Related Symptoms/ Tests Positive

- **Education**
  - It is important to educate your leadership team on COVID related symptoms, employee awareness, engaging with the employee and next steps.

- **Reporting Procedures**
  - Who will the employee be notifying if they are not feeling well?
  - Have the employees been notified they should stay home if they are not feeling well?
  - Does the manager know what to do or say if they notice an employee not feeling well?
  - Who will ask the important question, Are you experiencing COVID related symptoms such as…
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Employee Displays COVID Related Symptoms/Tests Positive

- **Next Steps:**
  - Provide clear communication with employee regarding expectations for returning to work.
  - Do they need to provide a medical release prior to returning to work?
  - Communicate to the employee if they are eligible to use their vacation/sick time and/or the use of FFCRA.
  - Remind immediate supervisor and other pertinent personnel of the importance of confidentiality. You do not want to violate HIPAA laws. It is not required for everyone to know the reason for Jane/John Doe’s absence.
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Employee Displays COVID Related Symptoms/Tests Positive

• **Next Steps Continued:**
  • If you have an employee who tests positive it is important to follow the previous steps with regards to communication and confidentiality.
  
  • Notifying co-workers: Maintain confidentiality of person who tested positive. Good rule of thumb to identify co-workers you should notify are individuals who “worked within 6 feet of them, for 15 minutes or more, within the 48 hours prior to the sick individual showing symptoms, or later.”
  

• Again, manage return to work expectations. Will they be required to have a negative or two negative tests prior to return? Or just quarantine for 14 days?

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Resources

CDC – Center for Disease Control

OSHA – Occupational Safety & Health Administration
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/

DOL – Department of Labor
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla/pandemic
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave

EEOC – U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
https://www.eeoc.gov/coronavirus

SHRM – Society for Human Resource Management
Thank You & Stay Well!

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