



aires

Coronavirus  
Disease –  
COVID-19

March 2020

pulse  
survey

Coronavirus Disease 2019, known as COVID-19, has dominated media outlets since January. As of March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined COVID-19 as global pandemic. The Aires Pulse Survey – COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has been created to understand how COVID-19 is impacting employee mobility and what actions employers are taking in response to the growing number of global cases. A total of 138 companies participated in this survey.

Nothing in this report should be interpreted as medical advice. Any questions regarding COVID-19 should be directed to a primary care physician. The contents of this survey report include information from the following globally recognized resources:

World Health Organization [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

National Institutes of Health [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

Aires recommends our clients monitor these sources for ongoing updates and further information.

## **What is Coronavirus and COVID-19?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. In humans, coronaviruses commonly cause cold-like symptoms and respiratory-related illnesses. Rarely, can animal coronaviruses infect people and then spread between people.

COVID-19 is a new virus that has not previously been identified in humans until recently with the epidemic in Wuhan, China. COVID-19 is believed to be similar in nature to SARS and MERS (both coronaviruses). Often the term *novel* precedes COVID-19; *novel* means *new*.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) named this particular strain of coronavirus COVID-19 because it was discovered in 2019, CO for corona, VI for virus, and D for disease.

Each day there are new discoveries of people with COVID-19. It is expected to continue to spread with no current vaccine. The websites cited above continue to report the number of cases in specific countries/states, along with information on symptoms, prevention, FAQs, travel information, and additional resources.

As of March 12, the WHO website states there are approximately 126,000 cases of COVID-19, approximately 4,600 deaths across 118 countries. The ten most affected countries (in order of severity) are China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, France, Spain, Germany, U.S., Switzerland, Japan. This list changes daily. New cases in China has leveled off; however, Italy has seen the greatest number of new cases in the past week.

Each location may be impacted in different ways depending upon not only the number of reported cases, but the rate as which new cases are being reports.

### **What the CDC says about COVID-19:**

- The best defense is common-sense hygiene habits such as regular hand washing, keeping hands away from the face, and coughing into the shoulder or elbow.
- The virus is mainly spread between people in close contact with each other (within six feet), through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible to contract the virus by touching an infected surface and then touching one's mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The recommended quarantine duration is 14 days.
- Healthy children are generally more resilient than the elderly and people with existing medical conditions or weakened immune systems.
- Facemasks should be worn by medical professionals and people who have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms.

## Impact on Employee Mobility

As a result of the spread of COVID-19, there are a larger number of travel warnings, travel bans, cancelled flights, closed offices, closed schools, cancelled meetings and conferences, cancelled sporting events and bans on gathering of various sizes. The interruptions to daily life are changing daily. Local governments are taking action to protect their citizens by limiting public exposure and encouraging social distancing. According to the survey results, employers are also taking action.

**67%**

of survey respondents have assignees in affected areas

### Types of local support provided:

Reimbursement of expenses for precautionary measures

**21%**

Increase in current hardship payment

**3%**

Implementation of a hardship payment

**0%**

Additional paid time off

**12%**



Action taken regarding employees' work locations:	Percentage
Return employee and family assignment*	33%
Return family from assignment	14%
Assign to different location	13%
Allow work from home/remote	73%
Additional/extended home leave	10%

\*An additional 8% of respondents noted giving employees the option to return home

17%

have cancelled one or more  
assignments or relocations

24%

have postponed one or more  
new assignments or relocations

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Most common locations noted by survey respondents are **China**, followed by **South Korea, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Asia, Germany, Spain, Europe, France and Iran**

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# 87%

have restricted travel to  
affected areas

# 52%

have restricted travel to  
non-affected areas

## Comments Regarding Travel Restrictions:

"All international travel has been cancelled and we are looking to cancel all domestic travel for the month of March and then take it each month by month."

"There is no business travel unless absolutely necessary."

"Need executive approval to travel to/from the affected countries."

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## Additional Comments of How Companies are Supporting Their Employees:

**"Chief Medical Officer updates/info."** "Links to sources like CDC." **"Internal memos."** "All hands meeting."

**"Posters on hygiene rules, email notifications, extra soap."** "Materials on health and safety training; prevention education has been sent to all employees of the organization via email." **"Hand sanitizer and travel disinfectant wipes have been handed to all employees of the organization".**

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Other things that organizations report doing:

**“Closing offices.”**

“Employees are asked to not physically attend or host any in-person meetings with 50 or more attendees until further notice.”

**“Encouraging employees who haven’t done so to get their flu shot.”**

“Increase cleaning of shared spaces/offices.”

**“We are following the CDC’s guidance as the basis for our Coronavirus decision making. Once a country reaches a level 2, all travel to the affected country must be approved by the Segment President. Once a country reaches a level 3, we will begin discussions to temporarily relocate the assignee (and family) to their home or another approved location.”**

“Employees returning from personal travel to affected areas must work from home for 14 calendar days before returning to the office.”

**“Conference calls with health clinic for all employees; COVID-19 reference site.”**



## Impact on Service Delivery

In terms of services for relocating employee, delays are occurring. Office closures, restricted travel, and general precautionary actions are starting to impact employee mobility processes (in some locations more than others).

The impact continues to change each day and the total impact is not yet known. In most locations, service delivery continues with little-to-no interruption; however, in highly affected areas, interruptions have begun.

Steamship lines are cancelling and delaying sailings from China and other Asian countries, which is leading to a surplus of containers in Asia and a shortage in the Americas and Europe. Destination services providers are using virtual services where possible for property searches. Schools are closed, making it impossible to tour or meet face-to-face with administrators. Immigration processing may also be impacted. If quarantines increase and daily work experiences more interruptions, other delays may occur.

Ways that Employee Mobility is Impacted by COVID-19
Travel bans, limited and restricted flights
Delayed assignments/relocations to affected areas
Modified or limited home search and settling-in services in affected areas
Delays in obtaining local registrations and immigration processing
Limited availability of steamship containers
Delays in shipment departures from affected regions
Delays in shipment arrival processing and customs clearance in affected regions
Increased costs imposed by steamship lines and airlines



## Risk Assessment

According to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), The CDC has established geographic risk-stratification criteria for the purpose of issuing travel health notices for countries with COVID-19 transmission and guiding public health management decisions for people with potential travel-related exposures to COVID-19. A number of factors inform the geographic risk stratification including size, geographic distribution, and epidemiology of the outbreak.

China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea are considered Tier 3 countries, where there is widespread, sustained (ongoing) transmission. The CDC recommends avoiding all nonessential travel to these locations and there are restrictions from these countries when entering the U.S. These locations are experiencing widespread school and office closures and interruptions to daily life.

The World Health Organization website is filled with information, including a Dashboard that is continuously updated with the number of global cases and resources. Visit [www.who.org](http://www.who.org).

**COVID 19**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE

**Health Alert:**  
**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

**You have traveled to a country with an outbreak of COVID-19 and are at higher risk.**  
**COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person.**




**Stay Home**  
Stay home for the next 14 days and monitor your health.  
Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and watch for symptoms.

**If you feel sick and have symptoms:**


- Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room.
- Tell the doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Do not travel while sick.

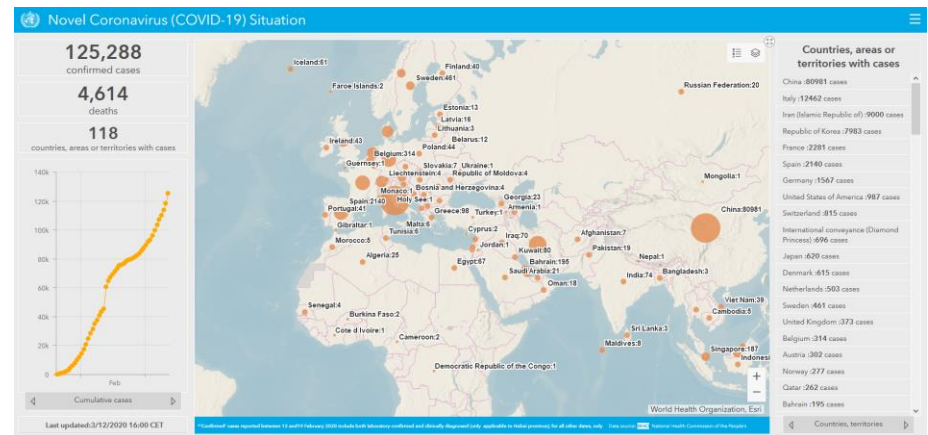
**Symptoms**  
Illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure.

**Symptoms can include:**

-  **Fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher)**
-  **Cough**
-  **Shortness of breath**

**Visit the website for more information on monitoring your health and how to contact local public health officials. Visit: [www.cdc.gov/COVIDtravel](http://www.cdc.gov/COVIDtravel)**

  
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## What Else Can Employers Do?

While it is too soon to know how many people will be affected by COVID-19, the reality is this virus is changing our world and processes and creating disruption. The effect of COVID-19 may not be realized for months. Prevention of any communicable virus is the key, which is currently being supported by ongoing education, travel restrictions and quarantines.

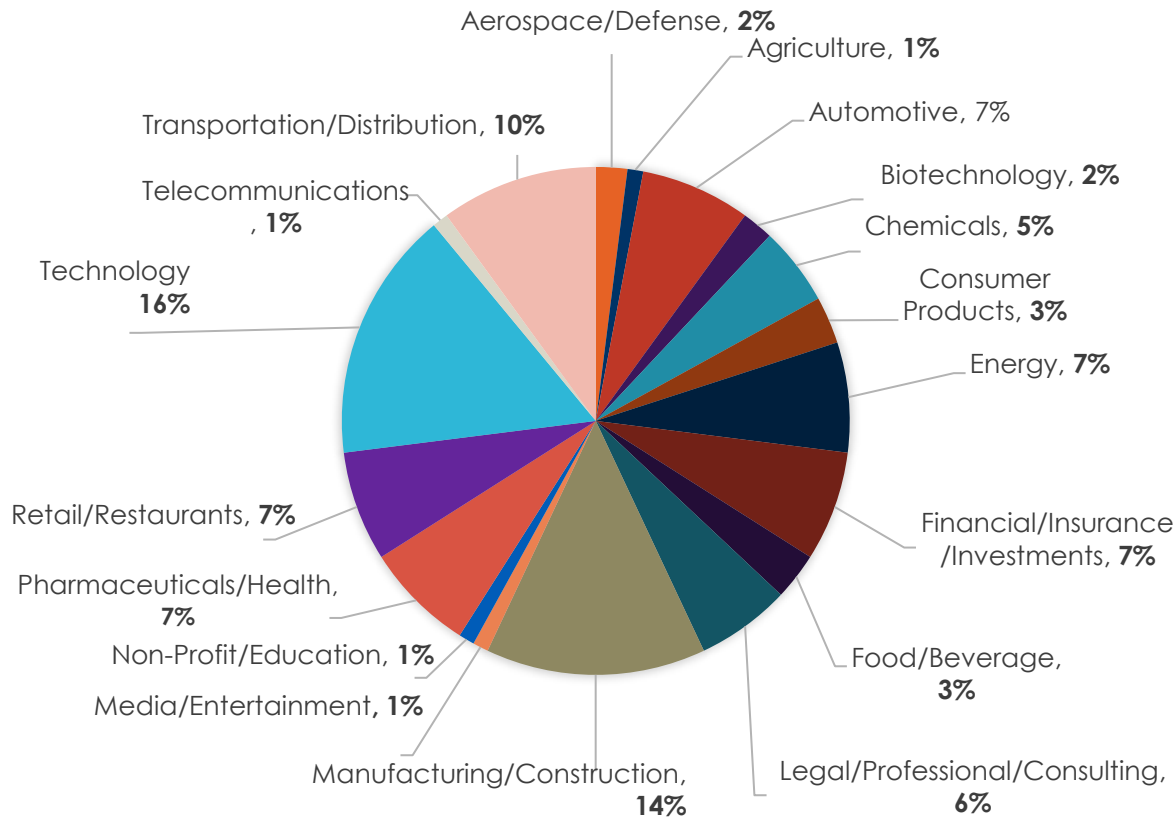
1. Employers are encouraged to develop a team or task force to control the information and education within their organizations if this is not already in place. The survey results show that employers are responding by restricting travel, returning assignees from highly affected areas, cancelling and postponing new assignments to highly impacted areas, and providing educational support. The amount of information available through media outlets is overwhelming. Focus should be placed on information from the CDC, NIH, and WHO.
2. Several survey respondents commented that they are working closely with International SOS and other service providers to assist with reacting quickly when needed. Leadership and constant communication is key – task forces, crisis teams, contingency plans, weekly and daily calls are common for many of the respondents of the organizations included in the survey.
3. In many cases, companies are implementing strategies to cope with the viral outbreak after the fact; however, it is possible to be prepared for such an event with tools and technologies that will halt travel to hot-spot areas in real-time as they are identified. These same tools provide live visibility to employee location, historical travel information, and the ability to check in on an employee's health and security immediately, with relative ease and convenience. Utilizing such a tool helps employers showcase that standards of corporate duty of care are being met and that employers are cognizant of the risks associated with business travel and mobility. While unfortunate circumstances, a global pandemic or tragic event highlights the importance of having strategies and solutions in place for keeping your employees' and corporate best interests at the forefront.

Aires has partnered with a cutting-edge software company to provide our clients with the best solutions in the realm of duty of care, immigration, and tax compliance for global and domestic business travelers. If you would like to see the tool in action or learn more about its extensive capabilities, please discuss with your Aires representative.

## Survey Participants

A total of 138 companies participated in this survey.

**Participant Profile**



**Participant Size**

# of Employees	Percentage
100,001 or more	9%
50,001 – 100,000	18%
20,001 – 50,000	14%
5,001 – 20,000	26%
1,001 – 5,000	21%
1,000 or less	12%



# CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19  
VACCINE RESEARCH 0034 - 234

Survey Conducted By



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