

## **Memo: Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Date: March 12, 2020

To: Clients

From: Questco

The world health community continues to monitor closely the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease it causes, named "coronavirus disease 2019" (COVID-19). Questco's number one priority is the safety and well-being of our employees, clients, families, and the communities in which we live and work.

In the United States, over 1,000 cases of the COVID-19 have been confirmed in 42 states. At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be but as of March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization officially announced it is a global pandemic.

As the coronavirus begins to spread in the U.S., Questco realizes the increasing need for our Clients to keep their employees informed and address business concerns around maintaining on-going operations. To support you in this time of uncertainty, Questco will be providing a series of communications about several employment-related facets of COVID-19, including:

- General Information on prevention tips and remote work (this email)
- Safety and Workers' Compensation
- Payroll and Healthcare Coverage Impact
- HR and Employment Issues

In this first of our four-part series, we will address general information regarding COVID-19. Below are tools to maintain a safe workplace and encourage and/or adopt practices protecting the health of employees, customers, visitors or others.

Employees should be asked to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. Remind employees of the following:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who display respiratory symptoms.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

Employees should not report to work if they experience any of the following respiratory symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue.

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill.

Employers can proactively prepare for outbreaks now and the possibility of more outbreaks in the future. There are preventative measures that can be taken to limit the effect of the virus in the workplace.

- Be aware of high-risk groups of employees and the possibility of taking extra steps to ensure the health of these employees: pregnant women, employees over the age of 65, employees with certain chronic health conditions.
- Provide tissues and hand sanitizers to employees.
- Ensure employees are educated on the proper ways of washing hands and what to do if they develop flu-like symptoms. Posters can be hung in bathrooms and eating areas or made available on your intranet. Access to these posters can be found on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/print/print-general.htm>.
- Send symptomatic employees home.
- Allow for telecommuting.
- Limit face-to-face meetings; utilize web conferencing tools, cancel or postpone nonessential meetings.

The following resources contain some additional links for useful information.

*Additional Resources:*

- For more information, posters, business guidelines and to keep up to date on the Coronavirus Disease, visit the CDC website regularly: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- A Smartsheet-created free template to build a COVID-19 preparedness dashboard (not to be considered expert advice): [coronavirus preparedness template set here.](#)
- Employees can be directed to the CDC for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>.
- Many state and local health departments have online local, updated information on where to report, test and current case counts. Search your state and locality health departments for more information.
  - Texas: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>
  - Nebraska: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
  - Arizona: <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-home>

If you have any questions about how COVID-19 may impact your workplace and employees, please do not hesitate to contact your Questco service provider. As we navigate through the challenging times ahead, Questco is here to support you.