March 24, 2020

COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Attention Employer:

We are receiving a lot of calls from businesses regarding COVID-19 and potential sick employees. There is much we are still learning about this new virus, so it is possible this guidance may change in the future. Based on what we know right now, this is our best advice on how to keep you and your employees healthy and limit the impact of this pandemic on our community.

March 18th, 2020, Governor DeWine requested businesses to begin taking the temperatures of every single employee every day before they come to work. It is advised that businesses send employees home who are sick. Governor DeWine also asked businesses to aggressively clean surfaces and to have soap/hand sanitizer available for their employees.

As you may already know, the most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough and shortness of breath. Runny nose, sore throat and sneezing is rare. If you believe an employee has symptoms of COVID-19, our recommendation is that you send them home. If they have serious symptoms, they should call their health care provider for medical advice.

If they are not sick enough to seek health care, they should stay home until their symptoms are gone as follows:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath);
- and at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

The Defiance County Health Department, along with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ohio Department of Health recommends employers do not require a health care provider’s note to validate the illness or return to work of employees who have been sick with acute respiratory illness. Health care provider offices and medical facilities are extremely busy and most likely not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

In addition, do not require employees with symptoms to be tested for coronavirus before returning to work. Current testing guidelines limit who is eligible for testing to the sickest and/or the most at risk of serious illness. An employee with mild symptoms may not need medical care and may not be suitable for testing. Additionally, testing employees who do not have symptoms is not effective, utilizes valuable time and resources, and is not an approved use of test kits. If you have an employee who has been seen by a health care provider and told to stay home for a period of time, we recommend you follow the health care provider’s orders.

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, we follow up with them to identify close contacts to recommend self-quarantine. We may also call their employer during the follow-up to reach the contacts and would ask that if we call you that you maintain employee privacy during that time.
Resources for Businesses:

- CDC has Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- Ohio Department of Health has a Businesses/Employers - COVID-19 Checklist
- Defiance County Health Department: defiancecohealth.org
- Ohio Department of Health has additional resources available at: coronavirus.ohio.gov.

If you have any questions please contact us at Defiance County Health Department,
419-784-3818 or call the Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 call center at 1-833-427-5634.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gerken, Health Commissioner
Defiance County Health Department
Dear Farming and Agriculture Community,

Defiance County General Health District (DCGHD) is closely monitoring Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). DCGHD is communicating with state and local partners to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and sharing prevention guidance. DCGHD is taking measures to minimize the impact within our county. DCGHD will share updated information to community partners and the public as we receive it. The Farming and Agriculture Community play an essential role in our food chain, this information is provided to help you continue to operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Essential Businesses, Operations, and businesses engaged in Minimum Basic Operations must take proactive measures to ensure compliance with Social Distancing Requirements, including where possible:**

- Designate six-foot distances. Designating with signage, tape, or by other means six foot spacing for employees and customers in line to maintain appropriate distance;
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing products. Having hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers

**Self-Monitoring**

- Check your temperature if possible. Monitor yourself for a fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher), coughing, shortness of breath, and chest pain.
- Seek prompt medical attention if you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 by calling your healthcare provider or call the emergency room.
  
  In adults, these symptoms can include:
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Persistent pain or pressure in chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face.
- Stay home if possible.

**Strategies to control the spread of COVID-19:**

- Encourage your employees to practice good hygiene. This includes washing hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
- Remember to use social distancing if making trips to grain elevators, fertilizer companies, or any other farming/agricultural related trips.
- Monitor employees’ temperatures or have them check their temperature prior to leaving their home. Require sick employees to stay home
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
  - This includes touch surfaces of any tractors, machinery, tools, equipment, and other shared areas.
- If possible, allow employees to work from home.
- Only allow essential workers in equipment. For example, do not allow children or family members inside the cabs of farm equipment.
- If you are regulated by other entities (meat inspection, dairy inspection), follow additional guidance of those agencies.
Updated information on Coronavirus can be found at:

Ohio Department of Health: [https://coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)

Business Help for Businesses impacted by Coronavirus: [www.coronavirus.gov/businesshelp](www.coronavirus.gov/businesshelp)

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

If you have any questions please contact us at Defiance County Health Department, 419-784-3818 or call the Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 call center at 1-833-427-5634.

Please continue to protect yourself from all infectious diseases by using these precautions.

- Stay home when you are sick
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Get adequate sleep and eat well-balanced meals
- Wash hands often with water and soap (20 seconds or longer)
- Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry your hands
- Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or after touching surfaces
- Clean and disinfect “high-touch” surfaces often
- Call before visiting your doctor
- Practice good hygiene habits
Your Mental Health Matters. Speaking out about your needs during this time is very important. Ensure you have what you need to feel safe, secure, and comfortable.

- Remember that distress, anxiety, fear, and strong emotions are normal in times of distress or crisis. Remind yourself and others that these feelings will fade.

- Stay informed. Get information from a trusted source, such as www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or by calling the Ohio COVID-19 call center at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). Learn and follow tips for preparing for and responding to COVID-19.

- It is important to get good information to help you prepare and respond, but do not overwhelm yourself, your family, or friends with information.

- Talk with your doctor. If you have a mental health condition, continue with your treatment plan and monitor for any new symptoms. Call your healthcare provider with any concern.

- Connect with others. Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, stress, depression, and boredom. You can make a phone call, send a text message, or write a letter.

- Relax by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray, or engage in activities you enjoy. Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.

If you are experiencing anxiety, stress, or depression related to the Coronavirus pandemic, help is available.

Local Resources:

- If you need immediate medical help call 911.

- Contact A Renewed Mind at 1-800-468-HELP (1-800-468-4357). This is a free, 24/7, and anonymous call line that provides a list of local resources and agencies that can provide assistance.

Other Resources:

- National Suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

- To connect with a crisis counselor call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 (1-800-846-8517 TTY)

- Connect with a trained counselor through the Ohio Crisis Text Line – text the keyword “4HOPE” to 741 741

- Call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services help line at 1-877-275-6364 to find resources in your community.
DEFIANCE COUNTY LOCAL RESOURCES INFORMATION

Call 1-800-468-HELP (4357)
Free, Confidential, 24/7

OR

visit defianceinfo.com for additional local resources

*The 1-800-468-HELP (4357) line or defianceinfo.com website does not have updates or any information regarding COVID-19. For all COVID-19 questions, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call the ODH line listed below.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) QUESTIONS?
Call the Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 line
1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)
or visit: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov

DONATIONS

The Defiance Dream Center is now collecting donations such as food, medical supplies and baby supplies for the community

Address: 1935 East Second Street
Defiance, OH 43512

Drop Off Times: Tuesday 9:00 - 11:00am
Thursday 1:00 - 3:00pm

Please contact the Defiance Dream Center with questions about donations at 419-789-4122