

COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH (SHCO)

worldsteel Health Guidance Note

COVID-19

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This document is provided as a guide only. The document is a generic example for worldsteel members' use to build their own systems to suit their organisation and should be viewed purely as advisory and supplementary to any statutory, corporate or local requirements.

Introduction

The following document constitutes guidance only and should be viewed purely as supplementary to any statutory, corporate or local requirements.

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, dry cough and shortness of breath. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart or respiratory chronic problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

Why are worldsteel releasing this document now?

While the virus has been impacting China since November 2019, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March. Cases have now been detected in most countries worldwide and community spread is being detected in a growing number of countries. The virus is having a profound impact on global financial markets and is likely to impact a large proportion of worldsteel's members, directly or indirectly.

What should I / my company do?

To minimise the impact of COVID-19 on their workforce and their businesses, steel companies are encouraged to:

- Follow coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public and the basic protective measures against the new coronavirus published on World Health Organization web page¹. [Click Here.](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public)
- Monitor the status of the development of the pandemic on the official World Health Organization web page². [Click Here.](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports)

¹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

² <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommendations

The following recommendations are based on OSHA 3990-03 2020 Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19³. [Click Here](#) to download the official document.

Measures for protecting workers from exposure to and infection with the novel coronavirus COVID-19 depend on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with infectious people and contamination of the work environment. Employers should adapt infection control strategies based on a thorough hazard assessment, using appropriate combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposures.

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is always a good practice to:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 40 to 60 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Immediately isolate people suspected of having COVID-19. For example, move potentially infectious people to isolation rooms and close the doors. On an aircraft, move potentially infectious people to seats away from passengers and crew, if possible and without compromising aviation safety. In other worksites, move potentially infectious people to a location away from workers, customers, and other visitors.
- Take steps to limit the spread of the person's infectious respiratory secretions, including by providing them with a facemask and asking them to wear it if they can tolerate doing so. Note: A surgical mask on a patient or other sick person should not be confused with PPE for a worker; the mask acts to contain potentially infectious respiratory secretions at the source (i.e., the person's nose and mouth).
- If possible, isolate people suspected of having COVID-19 separately from those with confirmed cases of the virus to prevent further transmission, including in screening, triage, or healthcare facilities.
- Restrict the number of personnel entering isolation areas, including the room of a patient with suspected/confirmed COVID-19.
- Protect workers in close contact with the sick person by using additional engineering and administrative control, safe work practices and PPE.

³ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

- Train all workers with reasonably anticipated occupational exposure to COVID-19 (described in the guidance) about the sources of exposure to the virus, the hazards associated with that exposure, and appropriate workplace protocols in place to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure. Training should include information about how to isolate individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and how to report possible cases. Training must be offered during scheduled work times and at no cost to the employee.

Experiences from worldsteel members to ensure business continuity.

Several worldsteel members located in affected regions have instigated initiatives to reduce risk, these include:

General practices for all personnel:

- Reduce the number of face-to-face meetings and the number of people involved
- Maintain a considerable distance from person to person, 2 metres is often recommended by the authorities
- If meetings are considered business critical the following will apply:
 - Minimum distance of 1.5m will always be kept
 - Exchange of documents will be prohibited
 - Meeting duration will be kept as short as possible
 - Only necessary people should participate
 - The meeting areas should be cleaned using disinfectants and participants should wash their hands immediately after the meeting
- Allow working from home if possible. For vulnerable employees (the elderly, those facing chronic health problems and pregnant women) work from home should be prioritised.
- Maintain natural air exchanges in this range: changes per hour (CPH) >4 in offices and promote natural ventilation as much as possible.
- Promote electronic exchange of documents rather than hard copies.
- Use remote access capabilities assurance (VPN and operational tests on all laptops, as well as any other necessary software to accomplish business tasks for example Skype, GoToMeeting, Zoom). Test VPN capacity to withstand network traffic during simultaneous login.
- Require employees to take their laptops back home daily in order to be able to work from home in case a community-wide quarantine is imposed at short notice.
- Ensure remote internet access for employees (adequate data provision for mobile phone connections, internet sim cards – sticks – micro cards inside laptops etc.).
- Ensure that laptops are provided to employees who may not have one, and who may be required to work from home (priority to key business positions after vulnerable employees).
- Frequent cleaning of sanitary, food preparation and serving facilities.
- Frequent cleaning of offices with the use of alcoholic antiseptic solutions.
- Prohibition of use of non-personal (colleagues') devices (phones, headsets, keyboards, etc.).

- Ensure that the areas dedicated to lunch/meals are properly sanitised and allow the minimum 1m safe distance to be maintained. Avoid face-to-face layout. All these areas need to have the proper cleaning equipment.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Avoid physical meetings with external partners or visitors. Have these meetings online.

General practices involving on-site medical staff:

- For on-site medical staff, make mandatory use of gloves and masks during each patient examination.
- Make sure every examined person wears a mask, an examination robe and disposable gloves.
- Use a thermometer / thermal camera if considered necessary to enable fast and efficient employee examination.
- Identify groups who are particularly vulnerable in the workplace (elderly people, people with chronic underlying diseases such as chronic cardiovascular - respiratory diseases and cancer irrespective of age).
- Employees who are sick (cold, seasonal flu, influenza, etc.) should stay in their home until they have fully recovered and prior their return to work, they should contact their direct supervisor and on-site medical staff.
- Employees who feel sick (fever, dry cough, etc.) during their working time, should inform their personal doctor and the occupational physician. Employees will depart from the workplace wearing masks and disposable gloves not using corporate transportation. The company will make the necessary alternative transportation arrangements.

General practices involving frontline workforce:

- Schedule shifts properly to ensure adequate time for cleaning is provided upon shift start to clean shared devices (desks, phones, computers, touchscreens, controls, etc.).
- Extend the shift duration temporarily.
- Rotational work is suggested to avoid large numbers of employees in open spaces (providing that work from home using a laptop is feasible).
- Calculate minimum required staff for production purposes, in order to identify any opportunities for flexible working schedules to avoid increased staff gatherings.
- Train additional staff in critical positions to ensure business continuity even in the event of a sudden quarantine or absence of workers who cannot be replaced due to their expert knowledge.
- Rolling lunchtime to avoid lunch areas getting crowded.

- Clean working areas (rooms, control cabinets, etc.) with an alcoholic antiseptic solution.
- Supply antiseptics at main locations inside the production areas for regular hand cleaning.
- For noisy indoor areas (>82dbA), emphasis must be given to prevent workers from coming in close contact. In those cases, the use of either a disposable mask or mobile communication should be considered.
- Attention should also be paid to ventilation/air-condition systems maintenance and cleaning
- Adapt shift schedules, so that experienced operators' risk of exposure is reduced, therefore reducing the risk of disruption to business continuity.
- Double the number of corporate buses used by employees commuting (decreasing the number of passengers per route). Employees should use of antiseptic solution while getting on and off the buses.
- Sanitise buses on a daily basis.
- Drivers must stay at least 1m away distance from personnel at all times while they are getting on and off. Driver access to the office is not allowed for any reason.
- Sanitise washrooms and bathrooms at least every 4 hours. Take special precautions in facilities that have running water, baths and hot showers.
- Temporarily increase the amount of company clothing (pants, shirts and jackets) available to ensure employees don't share clothes or PPE.
- Shift leaders should track workers present daily, recording all the people with whom he/she had contact. This is important for suspected/confirmed case management.
- In case of an occupational accident, aid should be provided taking all the necessary precautions (rescuers to use disposable gloves, glasses, FFP3 masks, full body uniforms).
- Ensure that contractors are taking the same precautions as your own company, ensure contractors are treated in the same way as direct company employees.