

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

*Updated March 17, 2020*

- 1. What is the best source for information about the coronavirus including how it is spreading, what locations are currently being impacted by the virus, what are the risks of contracting the disease, how to prevent becoming infected, etc.?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website is the best source for accurate information on the disease. Click here for the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

- 2. What is the novel coronavirus?**

According to the CDC, a novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

A diagnosis with coronavirus 229E, NL63, OC43 or HKU1 is not the same as a COVID-19 diagnosis. Patients with COVID-19 will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

- 3. Why is the disease being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?**

As detailed by the CDC, on Feb. 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan, China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV".

There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. The name of this disease was selected following the World Health Organization (WHO) best practice for naming of new human infectious diseases.

- 4. What is the source of the virus?**

According to the CDC, coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19. Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people. More information about the source and spread of COVID-19 is available on the CDC website – please refer to the response to Question 1 above for a link to the website.

## 5. What is the best way to protect myself from contracting the coronavirus?

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus and to exercise commonsense measures. Health officials, including those at the CDC, have consistently recommended the following actions to help prevent the spread of all respiratory diseases such as the flu, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Maintain at least three feet of distance between oneself and others, including those who are coughing, sneezing or have a fever.
- Wash your hands vigorously with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Exercise respiratory etiquette, and cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Afterward, wash your face and hands as soon as possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.

The CDC's website discusses the proper technique for washing your hands. Here is the link to the site: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

## 6. Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

The CDC indicates that currently, the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person. Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home – depending on how sick they are – until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary, so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and control experts, and public health officials. The decision involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

Current CDC guidance for when it is OK to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis and includes meeting all of the following requirements:

- The patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The patient is no longer showing symptoms, including cough.
- The patient has tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart.

Someone who has been released from isolation is not considered to pose a risk of infection to others.

## 7. Can someone who has been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

The CDC explains that quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the period during which people have developed illness after exposure. For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure, because 14 days is the longest incubation period seen for similar coronaviruses. Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others because they have not developed illness during the incubation period.

**8. Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food, including refrigerated or frozen food?**

The CDC states that coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating food, it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very a low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated or frozen temperatures.

Learn what is known about the spread of the disease by visiting the CDC website provided to the answer of Question 1.

**9. What is the company doing to prepare for the potential for the coronavirus impacting its employees and their operations?**

The company is constantly monitoring developments. It is in communications with various government officials at the national, state and local levels, and it is following the advice and guidance provided by the CDC. HII has a detailed crisis management plan in place for dealing with a wide range of different contingencies including hurricanes and other natural disasters, terrorist threats, power outages/failure of utilities and pandemics. . Employees should visit their Division website for specific information.

**10. What should I do if I become sick and think I may have the virus?**

If you are sick with flu-like or respiratory symptoms, you should stay home, immediately contact your primary care physician and follow their advice for treatment. Employees who report to work sick with flu-like respiratory symptoms will be sent home by their manager. Please visit your Division website for further information regarding this issue and the return to work process.

**11. If I need to take time off to care for a family member who has contracted the virus, will the company provide me with a leave of absence?**

Yes, employees may use their PTO and also may be eligible for the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Please contact your local Leave Administration office or HR representative for further information.

**12. If I am required to travel for work at a site that is impacted by mandatory quarantine, will I be paid when I return from working at the site for the time I must be quarantined?**

If possible, arrangements will be made for you to work from home during the quarantine period. However, if this is not feasible, you will be paid at your regular straight-time base rate of pay for the 14-day quarantine period.

**13. If I am required to be quarantined following a personal trip to an area impacted by mandatory quarantines, will I be paid?**

Please see the answer to Question #16 below.

**14. Has the company banned work-related travel to any locations?**

The company is currently following the CDC's guidance on travel. As of March 6, 2020, the CDC recommends avoiding all nonessential travel to China, Iran, Italy and South Korea and has issued travel alerts recommending that travelers practice enhanced precautions in Japan. These travel advisories extend to layovers in the affected areas. Moreover, entries into the United States of foreign nationals who have been in China or Iran in the 14 days prior to entering the U.S. have been suspended in many circumstances.

Please contact your HR representative for specific questions.

**15. Has the Company banned large meetings, for example "all hands" staff meetings, or other large gatherings of employees?**

Yes. Please visit your Division website for specific information on limitations. Whenever possible all meetings regardless of the number of participants should use teleconferencing, WebEx, WebJoin, etc. rather than gathering employees in a conference room.

**16. What happens if I am exposed to someone with the COVID-19 virus?**

If you have been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have been ordered by a local Health Department or licensed medical professional to quarantine for 14 days, you should provide the company with documentation of this fact. Upon receipt of the documentation, the Company will make arrangements for you to work from home if possible. If working from home is not possible, the Company will pay you for the period of quarantine. If you are not ordered by the Health Department or a medical professional to be quarantined, but you wish to self-quarantine for 14-days, you may work from home with approval of management, take liberal leave, dock time, or take PTO.

***Note: These FAQ's will be updated as more information becomes available. For specific information related to pay and benefits, please visit your division's website.***