



## Pandemic Preparedness – COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

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### Introduction

According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC), Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people, such as with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in China and some limited person-to-person transmission has been reported in countries outside China, including the United States. However, respiratory illnesses like seasonal influenza are currently widespread in many US communities.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19.

During a COVID-19 pandemic, Sterling Commercial Roofing's overall aim will be to encourage our staff to carry on as normal if they are well, while taking additional precautions to protect them from exposure to infection and to lessen the risk of spread to others.

In terms of business continuity, this means that we will seek to sustain our core business and services as far as is practicable during a COVID-19 pandemic and therefore we will continue to operate largely within the existing framework of company policies and procedures. However, Sterling Commercial Roofing recognizes that during such times some additional provisions will be required to support staff.

### During a Pandemic

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the US. They should identify and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following: (a) reducing transmission among staff, (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, (c) maintaining business operations, and (d) minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains.

During a recognized COVID-19 pandemic, Sterling Commercial Roofing will implement the following provisions:

### Communications

During the period of a pandemic, regular guidance and sources of information and support may be made available via line managers/supervisors, notice boards, Sterling Commercial Roofing Intranet and Website. Staff should monitor these sources closely to stay up to date with what is happening within the workplace

and what action is being taken to ensure Sterling Commercial Roofing meets its obligations to staff, customers and other stakeholders.

### Additional Hygiene Arrangements

- Sterling Commercial Roofing will provide antibacterial sanitizer located throughout company premises and staff will be encouraged and reminded to use these regularly.
- All surfaces, door handles, banister rails, telephones, computer keyboards etc. will be cleaned more frequently.
- All waste bins will be emptied daily.
- Staff are encouraged to always use clean tissues to cover their mouth/nose when they cough/sneeze (and not to use cloth handkerchiefs or re-use tissues) and to wash/sanitize their hands regularly.

### Visitors

- Visitor passes will largely be discontinued except in exceptional circumstances for the duration of any pandemic.
- Visitors may be asked if they have any COVID-19 like symptoms before being allowed into company premises.
- Visitors will be encouraged to sanitize their hands before entering Sterling Commercial Roofing premises.
- Visitors may be accompanied and may be confined to meeting rooms where at all possible.

### Face to Face Meetings

- Travel should largely be avoided unless essential and in particular if it involves the use of public transport.
- Face to face meetings should be avoided wherever possible and use of telephone/teleconferencing/email facilities should be encouraged.
- Where face to face meetings are unavoidable, the meeting rooms should be used which will have sanitizer pumps/tissues/waste bins provided and will be cleaned daily.

### Staff Identified as Potentially At-risk

- Staff at risk of developing COVID-19-related complications (e.g., pregnant workers and those with compromised immune systems) will be reassigned from high-risk work sites and locations in the event of a pandemic. If this is not possible it may be necessary to ask such staff to work from home, or remain at home until it is deemed safe to return to the workplace.

### Staff with COVID-19 Symptoms

(The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of: fever, cough or shortness of breath; other breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.)

### *While at Work*

If a member of staff feels ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, it is important that they do not simply carry on working. They should report their illness immediately to their line manager and if the symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, they will be sent home, advised to contact their GP and told not to return to work until the symptoms have cleared.

### *While Not at Work*

If they develop symptoms whilst not at work, they should adhere to the following advice:

- Inform their manager that they are ill using the recognized process
- Stay at home and rest
- Not go to work until they are fully recovered and their GP has confirmed they are no longer infectious

As part of the reporting procedures, the manager will seek the permission of the employee to inform their colleagues that they are suffering from COVID-19. This is really a private matter for the individual, but allowing colleagues to know about it will allow them to look out for early symptoms in themselves, and allow any who may be at-risk in some way (e.g., pregnant) to seek medical advice.

### *Staff Who Have Difficulty Attending Work (Where They Do Not Have the COVID-19)*

In general staff will have no right to refuse to attend work during a pandemic unless there is a clear health and safety risk. Their employment contract will oblige them to carry out their normal duties and refusal to do so may put them in breach of their contract. However, Sterling Commercial Roofing is aware that certain situations can occur:

#### 1. Public transport is shut down:

Where an employee has difficulty getting to work because of a failure in the public transport system due to the pandemic, then they will be encouraged to seek other methods of getting to work. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for some staff to work from home during this period of difficulty, to vary their start and end times, or to take annual or unpaid leave. Employees will not be paid if they fail to turn up for work and should discuss the options with their line manager as soon as possible.

#### 2. The employee reports that a member of their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but that they themselves are okay and would be willing to attend work:

Sterling Commercial Roofing recognizes it has a duty of care to others in the workforce and the individual will be advised to remain at home until the ill relative is no longer infectious, however Sterling Commercial Roofing might wish to discuss the possibility of the employee working from home if possible. Under these circumstances the employee will receive their full pay as if they had been working normally.

3. The employee reports that their child or other dependent has COVID-19 and they are unable to arrange care at short-notice:

Under these circumstances, Sterling Commercial Roofing recognizes that the employee has a statutory right to a reasonable period of time off to care for these dependents. This is limited to sufficient time off to deal with the immediate issue and sort-out longer-term caring arrangements; the individual should discuss their situation with their line manager. Sterling Commercial Roofing will apply the provisions of its Special Leave Policy in these circumstances after which annual or unpaid leave would need to be taken. However, if the sick individual is a member of the employee's household then the provisions of b) above would apply.

4. The employee asks not to attend work because of fear of contracting COVID-19:

The employee is contractually bound to attend work, and not doing so in these circumstances may be dealt with through Sterling Commercial Roofing disciplinary procedures. However, if Sterling Commercial Roofing is convinced that the individual has psychological or physical reasons whereby they should not attend, then it may decide to agree to a period of annual/unpaid leave, or working from home arrangements with the employee concerned.

5. The employee has school-age children and the school is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

The provisions of item 3 above would apply.

### Working Flexibly

The impact of any pandemic will normally mean an increased workload due to a reduction in the actual staff available for work. It will therefore be essential that we maximize the capacity of our available workforce by asking staff to work more flexibly and/or differently. Therefore, Sterling Commercial Roofing reserves the right to ask staff to undertake one or more of the following options:

- Work additional hours to cover for sick colleagues
- Work more flexibly as required
- Work in a different job role for a period (with appropriate training)
- Work from an alternative location, or even from home if appropriate
- Cancel planned annual leave

The use of these flexible work practices will vary depending on the seriousness of the staff shortages and the needs of the business at that time. Staff will be paid based on the additional hours and responsibilities they undertake.

### Post Pandemic Considerations

After the first wave of a pandemic, Sterling Commercial Roofing acknowledges that staff will need time to completely recover their full fitness and performance levels. Managers will ensure that staff who had been asked to work extended hours, or were denied their planned leave are given annual leave where at all possible. However, the possibility of subsequent pandemic waves has to be kept in mind and Sterling

Commercial Roofing will discuss with staff the lessons learnt from the current pandemic and continue with the preparations required to cope with subsequent waves.

### Training

Sterling Commercial Roofing employees will be periodically trained on the company policy pertaining to a pandemic and on health issues of the pertinent disease to include prevention of illness, initial disease symptoms, preventing the spread of the disease, and when it is appropriate to return to work after illness.

### Program Effectiveness

The plan and emergency communication strategies will be annually tested, via a table top exercise, to ensure it is effective.