

WEEKLY TOOLBOX TALK: CORONAVIRUS

You most certainly have heard recent news stories about an outbreak of Coronavirus across the globe that generated in China, as well as the diagnosis of a small number of related cases here in the United States.

While the news stories can provide useful information, their sensationalist tone can often frighten the listener and exacerbate concern. Following is the most recent information provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the virus—what you need to know and what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV) in a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

How is Coronavirus spread?

Health authorities have not confirmed how coronavirus is transmitted but suspect it is spread person-to-person. There is also evidence that the virus has been spread by animal sources, including individuals with links to seafood or animal markets. They do not believe you can get it from air, water or food.

What are the signs and symptoms of coronavirus?

Individuals infected with coronavirus have displayed the following symptoms:

- Mild to severe respiratory illness
- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

How can I protect myself?

The Center for Disease Control CDC recommends the following additional steps:

- If you are planning to travel to any of the countries identified with cases of Coronavirus, please inform your supervisor and HR department.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I get sick?

You may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether coronavirus testing or treatment is needed.

REMEMBER!! If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.