



*Total Worker Health*® Employer Guide

# C VID-19

**Edition**

**April 2020**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## This guide was made possible with resource and technical support from:



The Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest (HWC) represents a partnership of the University of Iowa's College of Public Health, Washington University in St. Louis, and the Nebraska Safety Council. The HWC is one of six Total Worker Health Centers of Excellence funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The Center was established in 2006 and is built upon extensive investigator experience in occupational health and safety, ergonomics, and health promotion. The vision of the HWC is to create a safe, healthy, and productive workforce.



The Nebraska Safety Council (NeSC) is located in Lincoln, serving all of Nebraska since 1961, with a mission of providing education and leadership to empower safety and health. Their passionate team of experts provides support and services to 600 organizations of all sizes, across a wide range of industries. The NeSC's comprehensive programs, training courses, events, and services are designed to improve employee care at a desk, on the production floor, behind the wheel, and off the job. Our unique Worker 360° approach provides integrated risk management that reduces health and injury-related costs, boosts worker engagement, and improves overall worker quality of life while positively impacting an organization's bottom line.



The St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition (BHC) is a non-profit organization representing over 70 leading employers, which provide health benefits to thousands of lives in Missouri and millions nationally. For over 37 years, the BHC has worked to achieve its mission of supporting employer efforts to improve the well-being of employees and enhance the quality and overall value of investments in health benefits. To accomplish these aims, the BHC centers its work on providing pertinent research, resources, and educational opportunities to help employers understand best practices for the strategic design (and informed use) of benefits to facilitate high-quality, affordable health care.



The University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita (KUSM-W) is a leader in training health care professionals for Kansas. As a community-based medical school, KUSM-W plays a central role in educating medical, clinical research, and public health students, many of whom remain in Kansas to practice. The KUSM-W campus, strategically located in the heart of Wichita, features 24 departments, 113 administrators and support staff, and 175 full- and part-time faculty with a reputation for excellence in teaching.

# INTRODUCTION

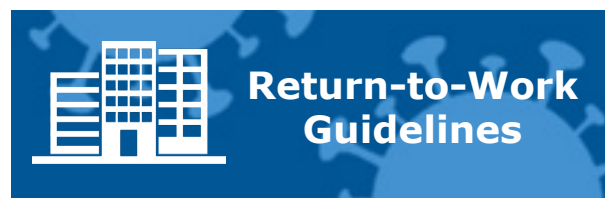
On March 11, 2020, the [World Health Organization](#) declared novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to be a global pandemic. In the coming weeks, communities, businesses, and employees quickly shifted to a new normal, characterized by widespread social distancing and stay-at-home orders. As organizations adapt to unprecedented challenges faced by essential, remote, and displaced workforces, one factor has become clear: protection of worker safety and health is critical, perhaps now more than ever.

## **Total Worker Health® Program**

The [Total Worker Health®](#) (TWH) program was launched by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in 2011 as a guiding framework for research and best practice application to promote worker safety and health. Recognizing that workplace threats can take many forms, [TWH strategies](#) focus on opportunities for employers to eliminate hazardous conditions; substitute policies, programs, and practices; redesign the work environment; and educate and encourage employees to make personal changes for enhanced well-being. The TWH agenda is supported by six regional Centers of Excellence, combining evidence-based science with real-world innovation to address the most pressing challenges faced by employers and their workforces.

## **Guide Overview**

Created through a collaboration of academic, business, and public health experts, this guide provides practical tips and resources for employers to apply traditional TWH principles to pandemic response strategies. Read on to learn more about the following topic areas:



# WORKER WELL-BEING

Amidst the uncertainty of living and working during the COVID-19 pandemic, many elements of employee well-being may be threatened. In an [April 2020 survey](#) by Gallup, 15% of Americans indicated that mental health was already suffering as a result of social distancing practices, with another 37% expecting a decline in the coming weeks or months. Similarly, 9% were already experiencing significant financial hardship, with another 37% anticipating future challenges. While only 6% noted a negative impact on their physical health, approximately [one-third reported](#) getting less exercise or having a worse diet. Additional worker well-being hazards are outlined below:



## Mental Health

Unprecedented events and overwhelming media coverage may cause feelings of fear, despair, hopelessness, and grief.



## Financial Well-being

Economic downturn and business closures or downsizing may impact employee income, savings, and investments.



## Social Connectivity

Limitations on in-person social gatherings with family and friends may increase loneliness and isolation.



## Physical Well-being

Disruptions to daily routines and resource access may hinder physical activity, nutrition, and sleep.



## Family Support

Employees may have dual demands of work and caregiving responsibilities for children and other family members.



## Health Care Access

New challenges in navigating disease information and changes to health care visits and supply availability.



***Ready to take action? Scroll down for specific business strategies and resources to preserve worker well-being during a pandemic.***

# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Mental Health

- ☐ Remind employees that they are valued and appreciated by the organization.
- ☐ Acknowledge that anxieties surrounding family needs, job security, finances, and disruptions to daily life may exacerbate stress and mental health challenges.
- ☐ Establish channels for open, two-way communication between managers and employees and encourage listening and empathy.
- ☐ [Train managers](#) on available mental health resources and how to appropriately support employees during this time of crisis.
- ☐ [Outline existing mental health resources](#), including [pandemic-specific services](#) available through an employee assistance program (EAP), health plan, or wellness program.
- ☐ Provide access to affordable [telehealth services](#), [virtual therapy sessions](#), or [digital coaching](#) to address mental health concerns.
- ☐ Promote free or low-cost [phone apps and online tools](#) for stress reduction, mindfulness, and personal resilience.
- ☐ Encourage employees to spend time outside, be active, pursue a hobby, and/or practice daily reflections or [mindfulness](#).



### Resource:

**COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Hub**

PsychHub



# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Financial Well-Being

- ☐ Be transparent and provide [adequate notice](#) regarding business sustainability plans and potential changes to working hours, pay continuation, bonus opportunities, and employment status.
- ☐ [Outline existing financial-assistance resources](#), including [pandemic-specific services](#) available through an employee assistance program (EAP), retirement plan, financial planners, or community organization.
- ☐ Establish an [employee emergency relief fund](#), seek foundation donations, offer appreciation bonuses, or provide advanced contributions to company-sponsored financial accounts (e.g., FSA, HSA, HRA).
- ☐ Consider implementing a temporary pay increase (e.g., hazard pay arrangement) to compensate employees for increased job risks.
- ☐ Educate employees on common [financial literacy topics](#) using online videos, trainings, or articles.
- ☐ Notify employees of financial assistance available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ([CARES](#)) Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ([FFCRA](#)), as well as how to take advantage of available benefits.
- ☐ Promote [healthy financial behaviors](#), like setting a budget, building short-term savings, or protecting important investments.
- ☐ Develop a resource guide or assign staff to support furloughed or displaced employees in navigating unemployment benefits and finding [community services](#) for basic needs (e.g., food, housing, health care).

# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Social Connectivity

- ☐ [Create opportunities](#) for employees to connect, share pictures, openly discuss common struggles, and receive reassurance using private social media groups or portals.
- ☐ Form [employee support or resource groups](#) based on common interests.
- ☐ Host informal social engagements using available web platforms, such as coffee breaks, birthday or work anniversary celebrations, and (if appropriate) happy hours.
- ☐ Consider extending access to communication software and apps during off-work hours so that employees can safely connect with friends and family.
- ☐ Recognize employees for their contributions at work and in the community via the organization's website, social media, or other communication channels.

# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Physical Well-being

- ☐ Outline existing physical activity, nutrition, and sleep resources, including [pandemic-specific services](#) available through an employee assistance program (EAP), health plan, or wellness program.
- ☐ Inquire about equipment rental programs available through local gyms (and reimburse or subsidize costs, if resources allow).
- ☐ Educate employees on planning for and establishing new routines for [physical activity](#), [food shopping](#) and [preparation](#), and [sleep](#) during the pandemic.
- ☐ Establish online discussion forums for employees to share recipes, exercise tips, and other recommendations for staying healthy at home.
- ☐ Compile [online videos](#) or [share virtual opportunities](#) for fitness classes, personal training, and cooking demonstrations.
- ☐ Conduct virtual stretch or [physical activity breaks](#) with a team member or instructor leading the movements.
- ☐ Implement weekly or monthly [well-being challenges](#) with suggested activities for employees and offer prizes for participation or completion.
- ☐ Provide information on healthy restaurant and [grocery delivery options](#) in the local community (and reimburse or subsidize delivery costs, if resources allow).
- ☐ Adopt [flexible work policies](#) that enable employees to adjust their daily schedule to accommodate physical activity, nutrition, or sleep needs.



# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Family Support

- ☐ Ensure employees and managers are aware of current organizational paid and unpaid leave policies, including state and federal guidelines.
- ☐ Implement an emergency paid or unpaid leave policy to provide additional time off for the care of children or other family members (Note: Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, [paid expanded family and medical leave](#) is required of organizations with fewer than 500 employees).
- ☐ [Outline existing caregiving resources](#), including [pandemic-specific services](#) available through an employee assistance program (EAP), local daycares, and community centers (e.g., the YMCA).
- ☐ Consider new, [situation-specific employee benefits](#), such as daycare or eldercare assistance, care subsidies or reimbursement, Flexible Spending Account contributions, or sitter search services.
- ☐ Offer employees the option of [flexible work arrangements](#), including varying shift times to accommodate family care needs during the day.



## Resource:

### COVID-19 and Family Caregiving

Caregiver Action Network

# WORKER WELL-BEING

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Health Care Access

- ☐ Outline existing health care benefits, including [pandemic-specific services](#) available through a health plan, local hospital systems, or provider groups.
- ☐ Share [reliable information](#) with employees regarding disease prevention, symptoms, transmission, and when to seek care.
- ☐ Eliminate or [minimize cost-sharing](#) for telehealth and virtual health care services, as well as COVID-19 screening, testing, and treatment.
- ☐ Highlight [workplace accommodations](#) and medical care guidelines for [high-risk populations](#) (e.g., elderly, immunocompromised, chronic disease patients, pregnant women).
- ☐ Work with pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) or local retail pharmacy to provide affordable (or no-cost) home-delivery options for maintenance medications and supplies.
- ☐ Consider implementing new [disease management programs](#) with telephonic, virtual, or texting support from health coaches and care providers.



### Resource:

#### **COVID-19: The Importance of Shared Decision-Making**

National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions

# REMOTE WORKER HAZARDS

While telecommuting arrangements have seen growth in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this shift for many organizations, with nearly [two-thirds of employers](#) transitioning additional employees to remote work on a full-time or part-time basis. Working from home has [demonstrated benefits](#), including greater autonomy, increased productivity (for some), and enhanced employee engagement and retention. However, telecommuting can be a difficult adjustment for workers, including new hazards to health and productivity:



## Technology

Limitations in technological infrastructure and tools may impede employee ability to perform tasks.



## Ergonomics

Inappropriate work environments at home may increase risk of physical injury, as well as noise and distractions.



## Team Dynamics

Teams may struggle in adapting to new communication channels, worker roles, and task requirements.



## Work-Life Balance

Blurred lines between professional and personal responsibilities at home may cause tension.



***Ready to take action? Scroll down for specific business strategies and resources to minimize remote worker hazards during a pandemic.***

# REMOTE WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Technology

- ☐ [Assess current gaps](#) in technological infrastructure and provide employees necessary tools to complete work remotely (e.g., computer or laptop with webcam, high-quality headset or headphones with microphone, company-sponsored cell phone, protected WiFi network, mobile hotspots).
- ☐ Provide training for employees that are unfamiliar with webinar or remote office technology.
- ☐ Expand access to the organization's virtual private network (VPN), secure cloud storage, or portable file-saving devices (e.g., jump drives, flash drives, external hard drives) to enable document retrieval.
- ☐ Consider additional software needs for employee devices, including email platforms, line-of-business applications, and productivity or communication tools (e.g., team chats, instant messaging, web conferencing).
- ☐ Ensure that company-sponsored and/or employee personal devices are equipped with necessary security and antivirus software to protect intellectual property and sensitive information.

# REMOTE WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Ergonomics

- ☐ Offer virtual ergonomic assessments, online trainings, or [checklists](#) to assist employees in creating a workspace that is free from hazards and that minimizes noise and distractions.
- ☐ Consider subsidizing or reimbursing costs for the purchase of new office equipment (e.g., chair, standing desk, lighting, external keyboard, mouse).
- ☐ Educate employees on potential hazards from suboptimal [workspace design](#), including strain to eyes, shoulders, neck, back, wrists, and elbows.
- ☐ Encourage employees to adopt health-promoting practices, including correct posture, frequent movement, screen breaks, foot and arm support, and appropriate positioning of computer monitor.

# REMOTE WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Team Dynamics

- ☐ Encourage teams and departments to stay connected through daily or weekly phone calls, emails, instant or text messages, or video conferences.
- ☐ Identify [preferred communication styles](#) of employees and assist managers in accommodating requests and adapting to unique needs.
- ☐ [Prioritize employee functions](#) and delineate reasonable expectations for workflow (e.g., specific tasks to be completed, quality standards, and deadlines).
- ☐ Establish [remote work policies](#) regarding required hours, mandatory meetings, flexible schedules, and in-office rotation (if equipment access is necessary).
- ☐ Discuss “[rules of engagement](#)” for team interactions, including frequency of check-ins, appropriate phone and web conferencing decorum, and procedures for urgent or time-sensitive requests.



# REMOTE WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Work-Life Balance

- ☐ Incorporate personal or family updates at the beginning or end of team check-ins, acknowledging that employees have lives outside of work.
- ☐ Encourage employees to create a daily routine or schedule and to maintain a separation between working and relaxation spaces in the home (if possible).
- ☐ Set [clear boundaries](#) for working hours, including restrictions on team communications during early mornings, evenings, and weekends.
- ☐ Review paid and unpaid leave policies for personal commitments and outline procedure for requesting and approving time off.
- ☐ Understand that personal interruptions (e.g., children, pets) may become more common and maintain flexibility in adjusting to individual employee needs.
- ☐ [Engage remote workers](#) in virtual well-being programs, as outlined in previous sections.



### Resource:

#### **Working Remotely During COVID-19**

Center for Workplace Mental Health

# ESSENTIAL WORKER HAZARDS

Although many efforts have been made to minimize disease spread through remote work arrangements, some essential business operations and roles cannot be performed in an offsite capacity. A [recent survey](#) by the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions reveals that this distinction is especially apparent between salaried and hourly workers, with the latter having less ability to work effectively from home. Differences also emerged across industries, with hourly workers in health care, food service, manufacturing, and retail sectors most likely to be impacted. If telecommuting is not possible, employers should take precautions to minimize the following hazards for essential workers:



## Workplace Controls

Challenges in adapting to physical distancing guidelines while accommodating business operation needs.



## Hygiene & Sanitation

Disease transmission risks from workplace environment, equipment, and coworker and customer interactions.



## Screening & Reporting

Added stress of monitoring disease exposure and planning for potential work disruptions.



***Ready to take action? Scroll down for specific business strategies and resources to address essential worker hazards during a pandemic.***

# ESSENTIAL WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Workplace Controls

- ☐ Assess [exposure risk](#) of workers based on job role and review [industry-specific guidance](#) from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- ☐ Eliminate or postpone in-person meetings and non-essential work travel.
- ☐ Increase the physical spacing between employees and workstations, maintaining a minimum distance of 6 feet (2 meters).
- ☐ Reduce interactions between employees, customers, and business partners by creating physical barriers or partitions (e.g., sneeze guards) and encouraging drive-thru, curbside, or no-contact operations.
- ☐ Restrict common areas and decrease tables and seating where employees frequently congregate, including break rooms, cafeterias, or outdoor spaces.
- ☐ Stagger shift and break times to limit the number of employees in building areas at one time.
- ☐ Divide employees into work pods or groups of the smallest size possible and support cross-training for essential functions to minimize team numbers.
- ☐ Continue safety and procedure trainings to reduce injury risks, especially for employees with altered job responsibilities.
- ☐ Provide appropriate [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE) based on job type and risk and ensure proper fitting, inspection, and replacement, as well as safe removal, cleaning, storage, and disposal of used items.
- ☐ Ensure that employees commuting via mass/public transportation have necessary PPE or travel support to minimize risks en route.
- ☐ Install [high-efficiency filtration systems](#) or increase ventilation rates to reduce virus transmission through the air.
- ☐ Do not let production demands threaten the ability to conduct safe operations.

# ESSENTIAL WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Hygiene & Sanitation

- ☐ Train custodial staff and all team members on [proper sanitation and cleaning techniques](#) for the facility, with a special emphasis on restrooms, doorknobs and handles, light switches, tables and countertops, elevators and stairwells, and any shared equipment.
- ☐ Use [disinfectant products](#) meeting the Environmental Protection Agency's criteria for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- ☐ Post signage demonstrating [proper handwashing technique](#) near sinks throughout worksites.
- ☐ Ensure soap and [hand sanitizer](#) (with at least 60% alcohol) are widely available and consider installing additional dispensers or distributing travel-size containers for personal use.
- ☐ Remind employees to avoid touching their faces, especially the eyes, nose, and mouth areas.
- ☐ Keep doors open, install foot or elbow pulls on doors, and limit the number of individuals using computers and phones to avoid contamination of high-touch surfaces.



### Resource:

#### **Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19**

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

# ESSENTIAL WORKER HAZARDS

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*







## Screening & Reporting

- ☐ Relax attendance penalties and expand sick leave policies to encourage employees to stay home if they or a family member are ill.
- ☐ Restrict building access to one entrance (if appropriate) to allow for employee and visitor screening upon arrival (Note: Exits should never be limited due to fire safety protocols).
- ☐ Consider [taking employee temperatures](#) using an infrared (forehead) thermometer, providing identification (e.g., wristbands) to those in normal range and sending those with fevers of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and above home immediately.
- ☐ Conduct online, paper, or verbal questionnaires to [assess employee symptoms](#), recent travel, and other risk of exposure (e.g., ill family member).
- ☐ Instruct employees with COVID-19 symptoms to contact the local health department for [testing and quarantine instructions](#).
- ☐ Identify team members that may have had [contact](#) with infected individuals and discuss exposure notification requirements with [local health department](#).
- ☐ Refer to CDC guidelines for recommended [procedure and documentation](#) to allow resumption of duties for employees with suspected or confirmed disease cases.
- ☐ Continue logging workplace injuries and COVID-19 exposures based on [recordkeeping criteria](#) from Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

# RETURN-TO-WORK GUIDELINES

As social distancing requirements are relaxed, employers should prepare to resume regular operations using a phased approach in the coming months. Federal and state guidelines have outlined the following categories for business reopening based on industry and infection risk:

	"More Essential" Industry	"Less Essential" Industry
Low Infection Risk	<p>Services/product more essential, low risk of workplace or customer infection spread.</p> <p><b>When Do Businesses Reopen?</b> First Priority ASAP</p>	<p>Services/product less essential, low risk of workplace or customer infection spread.</p> <p><b>When Do Businesses Reopen?</b> As infection rate goes down . . .  . . . pace of reopening goes up </p>
High Infection Risk	<p>Services/product more essential, higher risk of workplace or customer infection spread.</p> <p><b>When Do Businesses Reopen?</b> As infection rate goes down . . .  . . . pace of reopening goes up </p>	<p>Services/product less essential, higher risk of workplace or customer infection spread.</p> <p><b>When Do Businesses Reopen?</b> Last Priority - dependent on infection decline and precautions put in place.</p>



***Ready to take action? Scroll down for specific business strategies and resources to create a safe and realistic return-to-work plan.***



# RETURN-TO-WORK GUIDELINES

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Considerations

- ☐ Monitor local and national [data sources](#) to assess new COVID-19 cases, disease transmission rates, and hospital capacity.
- ☐ Refer to [public health](#) and [government](#) guidance regarding return-to-work criteria based on geographic and industry-specific risks.
- ☐ Determine which employees are most essential to business operations and economic recovery and prioritize their return-to-work first.
- ☐ Define which job roles and tasks can continue to be performed remotely and consider adopting permanent telecommuting policies.
- ☐ Maintain workplace controls for onsite operations, including hygiene, sanitation, screening, and reporting protocols as outlined in earlier sections.
- ☐ Assess the availability of [virus and antibody testing](#) and seek CDC recommendations on if such tests should be used to confirm employee health status.
- ☐ Continue to follow public health guidelines regarding special accommodations and protections for [vulnerable or high-risk](#) employees.
- ☐ Reexamine above points periodically to evaluate appropriateness and potential changes, including the need to revert to prior social distancing and pandemic strategies due to disease resurgence in the community.

# RETURN-TO-WORK GUIDELINES

*Click on the blue text below to access additional resources.*



## Future Preparations

- ☐ When a vaccine becomes available, consider opportunities to make prevention affordable and accessible for all employees (and family members, if possible).
- ☐ Document best practices and lessons learned from COVID-19 for application in future [pandemic planning efforts](#).
- ☐ Develop a [business continuity plan](#) to minimize operational, financial, and workforce-related risks during an emergency.
- ☐ Establish an infectious disease response team with representation from multiple departments, including safety, health, technology, communications, human resources, and benefits.
- ☐ Consider hiring a Chief Medical Officer to provide additional guidance on clinical risks and exposures, as well as updates on anticipated public health threats.

# EMPLOYER CASE STUDIES

Wondering how other business leaders are applying *Total Worker Health*® principles to their COVID-19 preparation and response? Scroll down or click the industry-specific icons below to access case studies from employers in the Midwest region.

## Manufacturing Organizations



## Academic Organizations



## Financial Organizations



## Health Care Organizations



## Non-Profit/Community Organizations



***Look for the lightbulb icon to see bright ideas from case study organizations.***

# MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS



**Bison Inc.** is a manufacturer of team sporting goods products, including basketball and soccer goals; volleyball, tennis, badminton post and net systems; football goal posts; gymnasium wall padding; and similar sports-related products primarily used in educational and recreational facilities. Bison employs approximately 100 workers at its headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska, and has sales operations in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Inman, Kansas. It sells in all 50 states and many foreign countries.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bison is operating under a new normal, while continuing to take orders and build and ship products. The emphasis has been placed on keeping their dedicated staff on board for as long as is possible or practical and ensuring that new schools are able to open in the fall as scheduled.

Bison has initiated social distancing, cleanliness, and other CDC and local government guidelines. This includes recruiting staff to sew CDC-recommended cloth face coverings to provide to employees, given the unavailability of commercial masks. The organization is keeping employees informed of the latest disease developments and status of the company and customer base. **They have also communicated internal rules and implemented an aggressive disciplinary process for any employee who chooses not to take the directives seriously. So far, no disciplinary actions have been necessary.**



While Bison continues to monitor all guidance and mandates, the organization maintains a philosophy of protecting employee health, short of a complete closure, and will take advantage of all federal, state, and local resources and programs to help them come out on the other end of the COVID-19 crisis.

# MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS



**C.J. Foods, Inc.** manufactures all natural and organic pet food and treats for many of the world's pet food brands.



**At the onset of the pandemic, C.J. Foods created a Virus Response Team (VRT) with leaders from key functions and facilities to lead the COVID-19 strategy planning for the organization.** The organization was deemed a Critical Infrastructure Employer and has given the appropriate materials to employees so they can continue to travel to work under the stay-at-home orders. Policies were created to address deliveries, truck drivers, shipping, etc., and it was mandated that temporary labor staffing agencies follow company guidance for illness exposure. These partners are now taking temperatures of temporary labor employees before sending them to the facility. Carpool guidelines have also been adjusted to maintain social distancing while the temporary laborers travel to work.

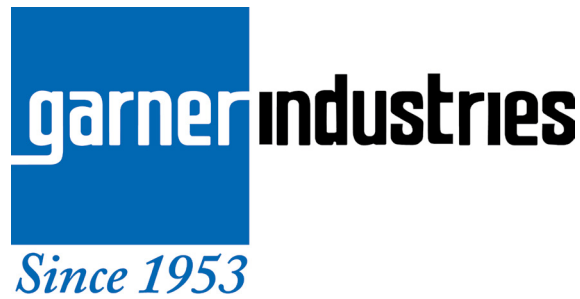


The VRT is working closely with local health departments for guidance, including educating employees about COVID-19, how it spreads, symptoms, treatment, and steps for prevention. **Managers have received training on procedures if an employee reports that they are ill with COVID-19. Chemicals and equipment needed in the event of a positive COVID-19 employee have been staged, wrapped, and labeled on a pallet so they are easily accessible.** Additional cleaning/sanitizing protocols have also been added throughout the day on common touch surfaces.



Temporary policies regarding quarantine events and employee leave have also been instituted. **The company is making up the difference and paying regular hourly/salary wages for the remaining hours left in the pay period for employees who do not have enough sick leave. This includes shift differential and mandatory overtime. The attendance point policy has also been suspended at this time.** The VRT is also developing a temporary policy to assist employees that cannot work as a result of school closings/lack of daycare. Office staff are encouraged to work from home, and necessary equipment is provided to do so. Onsite, the number of chairs in breakrooms and the number of team members taking breaks at one time are limited.

Effective April 20, 2020, C.J. Foods is taking temperatures of all employees to help to continue to mitigate risk of exposure to team members and the facilities. An entrance has been designated that all team members must report to prior to their shift to have their temperature taken. If a team member flags with a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, they will be sent home and asked to consult with their physician. Team members with a temperature below this threshold will be able to enter the facility for their shift.



**Garner Industries** specializes in plastic injection molding, CNC machining, and custom tool building. The company is also the manufacturer of the BinMaster product line of level measurement sensors, material management, and data monitoring systems for bins, tanks, and silos. BinMaster products are sold throughout North America and exported to more than 55 countries in the global instrumentation market.

Garner's response to COVID-19 has included a cancellation of work travel and required self-isolation for employees returning from personal travel, totaling fourteen days for international travel and five days for domestic travel. No visitors are allowed in worksite buildings, except required facility support vendors and those necessary to maintain operations. Cleaning frequency and the types of items disinfected have been expanded, and hand sanitizer has been placed on the production floor, in the lunchrooms, and in public areas. Internal doors have been opened with doorstops, when possible, to minimize contact on door handles. To eliminate the use of shared space the reception area, automated call forwarding is being utilized when the receptionist is not available, as opposed to substituting another person at receptionist station. In addition, **facilities are checking temperatures of all employees each day. Anyone with a fever over 100 degrees is sent home and must present a doctor's release form to return to work.** Two thirds of office personnel are working from home, and for essential employees, production floor spacing has been increased and a "zoned" approach has been implemented to limit contact with others.



Internal shared coffee pots have been discontinued, while still maintaining external vending operations. **A policy has been implemented to allow no more than two people at a break table at once, seated opposite each other.** Lunch times have been staggered to accommodate any crowding and, weather permitting, employees are encouraged to get outside.



The volume of in-person meetings has been reduced, including group huddles, being replaced with virtual technology options instead. For those in-person meetings that continue to be required, adequate space is made available so attendees can maintain social distancing guidelines. Leadership meetings regarding company status and any actions required are conducted daily, with updates to employees sent via email regarding operations when necessary.



# MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS



**Green Quest Recycling** is committed to providing quality recovered materials, as well as education on environmental recycling to assist in making the world a cleaner place.



To keep facilities clean, **a designated team member is spraying and wiping down the front office and break room three times per day. Assignments have also been made for employees to help clean the restrooms two times per day.** All personal items brought from home must be taken home every night. In the breakroom, dish soap is provided and any dishes that are used must be washed after each use. Sponges next to the sink are one time use and then must be thrown away. After each break, an employee is assigned to wipe down the break room with soap or a disinfectant wipe. Gloves are provided on the break room table, and employees must wash hands before and after breaks using soap or hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.



Employees are not allowed to share any personal items, including PPE. Staff are also required to practice social distancing and to stay at home if they are sick, with reminders to cover coughs and sneezes using elbows and to throw tissue in the trash immediately and wash their hands. **Any employee or customer showing symptoms on the job site will be isolated in a room until they can safely be moved offsite.** To minimize customer contact, the facility Scale Window remains closed during the day and is opened just enough to pass a paper scale ticket through when a customer needs service.

# MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS



## HEXAGON

**Hexagon** is a global leader in the industry for all-composite Type 4 cylinders.

Starting in March, Hexagon began holding daily, half-hour meetings with executive management. As soon as March 9, the organization was aware of the real possibility of people needing to work from home and that a reduced number of people running the manufacturing process was likely. Hexagon immediately began practicing the social distancing recommendations and encouraging good hygiene among employees. Throughout this timeframe, CDC and WHO guidelines were consistently monitored and a contingency plan developed for reduced operations.



By March 22, the number of people in the Hexagon facility was reduced over 60%, maintaining only essential personnel to continue the manufacturing process. During this time, **PPE and cleaning supplies were increased throughout the facility, and chairs were removed from breakrooms and common areas to maintain fewer than ten people in any given area.** Sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer were dispersed, along with additional hygiene recommendations posted in all restrooms. The IT staff worked quickly to transition as many people as possible to work remotely, and the organization continues to stay engaged with all employees at home.



Throughout this time, **HR policies were adjusted to provide leniency in the event of absence, with the company initially allowing a balance of 40 hours of PTO to be pulled ahead.** As more guidance comes from state and local government, Hexagon remains committed to supporting its people through supplemental unemployment benefits and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

# MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS



**Nature's Variety** makes raw pet food for dogs and cats, crafted by a team in Lincoln, Nebraska. Made in small batches in company-owned facilities, the raw foods are minimally processed and held to the highest quality standards.

During this time, Nature's Variety is taking extra measures to help limit the chances of exposure to COVID-19 for employees as well as the public. All non-essential personnel are working from home to limit the number of people in each facility. All essential personnel are checked daily for fever, cough, trouble breathing, and any known contact with someone that has been confirmed to have COVID-19.

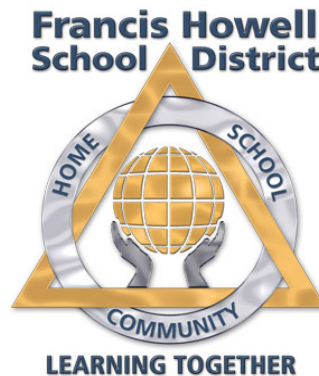


**Employees that travel outside of Lincoln are required to report the trip to their supervisor so that the destination can be cross-checked as a disease hot spot.** If travel is flagged, or a person is showing symptoms, then self-quarantine is required for fourteen days.

During working hours, all associates are always required to wear masks, and face shields are to be worn when employees must be within six feet of another person for work purposes. **All facilities are cleaned hourly in high-traffic areas, with ozone fogging every week. Vending machines and other outside serviced food/drink have been replaced with items that can be cleaned upon entry to reduce the chances of cross-contamination.** As a food facility, stringent handwashing and sanitizing protocols were already in place. As this is a very fluid situation, procedures are constantly changing to combat the pandemic.



# ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS



**Francis Howell School District** serves 17,000 students over 150 square miles of St. Charles County, making it one of the largest school districts in the state of Missouri. As with many academic facilities, COVID-19 has required the closure of school buildings in accordance with social distancing guidelines. To assist students and over 2,500 employees in adjusting to the “new normal” of a virtual learning environment, Francis Howell has implemented the following strategies.

Students were provided Chromebooks and/or paper packets of learning materials so they could continue their classes in a virtual environment, and teachers hold virtual or phone-based “office hours” to support students in their learning. Employees were provided laptops if a home computer was unavailable, and the district’s VPN network was expanded to allow file sharing and access. **Daily emails are sent to departments with information to support employee well-being at home,** including tips on remote work, stress relief recommendations, physical activity ideas, and some much-needed humor. Weekly Zoom meetings help departments maintain working relationships in the absence of face-to-face conversations. **Food distribution sites have been opened at three locations and are staffed by bus drivers and other non-remote employees, to provide meals for students and maintain Francis Howell’s partnership with the community.**

Kevin Supple, Chief Operating Officer for the district, commented on the remarkable changes that have occurred over the last few weeks:

*“In today’s difficult environment, we continue to adhere to our mission of empowering students to be lifelong learners. While that may look a little different now, we know that our commitment to supporting the physical, mental, and social well-being of our students and staff, before, during, and after the pandemic, will translate to a high-performing organization.”*

# ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS



**Orion Education & Training** is a service agency that furnishes more efficient and/or economical services to maximize educational opportunities for Kansas students. Service centers also act as liaisons between local districts and the Kansas State Department of Education.



**All facilities have closed as a result of COVID-19, but employees are working from home, if possible, and continue to be paid their normal salary during the scheduled pay periods.** Technology was purchased for employees who did not already have equipment to work from home. Web conferencing is used for meetings, along with email and phone calls to communicate.

A company was hired to sanitize the building offices, and all doors display signage indicating that the building is closed to the public. Vendors normally in the facilities were contacted and will be rescheduled when able. Only employees are allowed in the facilities at this time (no family members), and if employees need to go in, they are instructed to go directly to their office and not visit any other office in the building. If employees need to work in the office, gloves, disinfecting spray and wipes, and hand sanitizer are available at all building entrances.



**Orion is encouraging professional development for all employees, and they have renewed their professional development training platform (Fred Pryor) for unlimited learning for professional and personal growth.**

The wellness committee is currently working on plans to help employees with 1) sitting at home while working, 2) working independently, 3) setting up a home office, 4) how to stay engaged and connected, 5) time management, and 6) exercise, eating healthy, and staying sane during this unusual time.



**"Virtual buddy breaks" are also planned in April and May to help employees stay active, and information regarding the YMCA's Y360 Program has been shared.**



**University of Nebraska Foundation** has a mission to grow relationships and resources that enable the University of Nebraska to change lives and save lives. Their vision is to be recognized as the trusted partner of those wishing to support the University of Nebraska and its affiliates.

Employees have been provided information on mental, physical, and emotional well-being, as well as tips on working from home and how to set up a workspace so that it is ergonomically efficient. Because many events have been canceled, the foundation has created new wellness activities that employees can participate in to earn points as incentives. **Point-eligible activities include sending a picture to the wellness team to include in a video; participating in at least five exercise classes (via YouTube/Zoom); and reading educational materials. In addition, an "Attitude of Gratitude" Challenge has been implemented to focus on the importance of positivity, even during uncertain/difficult situations.** A primary focus has been on getting employees outside and walking, which supports the Organizational Steps Challenge goal and also drives home the importance of exercise for physical and mental wellbeing.





# FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS



**Golden Plains Credit Union** is a state-chartered credit union offering various banking and financial-related services to its members.



Because building lobbies are closed, every effort has been made to do everything by phone and mail. **Appointments are made for transactions that cannot be handled virtually, and only the person whose signature is required attends the appointment.** A six-foot distance requirement has been implemented, and all staff food days have been eliminated. Training and meetings are done by web conference, and if an in-person meeting is needed, social distancing guidelines are followed and the group size is limited to ten employees.



Employees are required to clean their offices with disinfecting wipes or spray between appointments. Bottles of hand sanitizer are at every workstation for members and employees, with display posters in bathrooms and email reminders to staff on handwashing guidelines. Gloves are available for employees who handle cash, and a janitorial service has started sanitizing desks each day, while the daytime janitor wipes down door handles throughout the day. **Since buildings are closed to the public, employees are able to wear jeans as a benefit, which makes everyone happy.**

Employees have been informed that they need to follow the travel restrictions issued by the governor. If they choose not to follow guidelines and go to a hot spot, they are required to self-quarantine for two weeks and must use paid leave or take an unpaid leave. Employees are being monitored and being sent home if they are not healthy (using paid leave). Golden Plains listens to employees regarding the need to self-quarantine, and staff have been trained on the new Families First Coronavirus Response Act.



Lincoln Orthopaedic Center  
*Dedicated Surgical Expertise*

**Lincoln Orthopaedic Center PC** is an orthopaedic surgical office and treats patients with musculoskeletal issues, in addition to being a pain management physician and orthopaedic ambulatory surgery center. Surgeons have helped to lead the community by postponing elective surgical cases during the time of crisis. In an effort to keep patients, staff, and medical providers safe, the following procedures have been implemented.



**Screening calls are made the afternoon prior to the next days' scheduled appointments, asking patients the following questions: 1) fever of 100.4 or higher, 2) cough or flu-like symptoms, 3) individual or household travel during the past fourteen days, and 4) reminder to come alone to visit, or limit to one person.** There is also a patient and visitor screening at the door, which includes: 1) identifying the patient and only one visitor as necessary, 2) taking current temperature, 3) asking if they have been experiencing any cough or flu-like symptoms, and 4) travel questions.



Plexi-glass shields have been added at the front desk, and staff and providers are wearing reusable, hand-made masks in patient care areas and masking any patients with a cough. **Lobby chairs have been replaced with plastic stackable chairs that are easily cleaned and disinfected, and social distancing signage is included throughout the area.** Staff are wiping down exam rooms after each use with anti-viral solutions that will kill COVID-19 and wiping down waiting room furniture and surfaces two times per day with disinfecting wipes.

Lincoln Orthopaedic Center has postponed scheduling elective surgical cases (currently) until May 6 and paired down office schedules to urgent/emergent visits in an effort to free up other care sites in the community so they can focus on sick patients. Staff are asked to take their temperatures at home before coming to the office and if above 99.4, they are asked that they stay home. There is a single staff entrance for the building, where management are taking and logging employee temperatures from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM, Monday through Friday, to assure that everyone working is fever-free. If staff enter after this time period, they are to report to the clinical manager for a logged temperature.



**The National Rural Electric Cooperative** has a mission to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.

The COVID-19 plan implemented major operational changes in offices in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Arlington, Virginia, to protect employees during the pandemic. In Lincoln, 96% of office employees were moved to remote work, requiring a heavy lift for leaders and the IT department, as well as faith and trust that employees could adapt to remote work. Taking phone calls from home and processing benefit payments for NRECA's membership base is a new experience.



**The organization's CEO and local leadership team implemented guidelines for employees performing tasks at home and in the office. Daily email communication from the CEO provides guidance and words of encouragement to ensure employees are taking care of their mental and physical well-being.**

Other COVID-19 procedures include mandatory work from home, if operationally possible, for all employees and contractors. Standards were elevated for cleaning and security in the office, and non-essential travel was suspended. To mitigate the potential spread of the disease, HR notification is required if anyone in an employee's household returns from out-of-town travel. Trips to the office are permitted, but each trip requires COVID-19 screening questions, and alternative arrangements are made depending on answers to the questions. There is also a required notification to direct managers and HR if an employee believes they have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 or tested positive. HR will evaluate the situation and determine if a doctor's note is required, with all information remaining confidential.



**NRECA has offered flexibility in employees' scheduled work hours at home so employees can balance their work and family demands. Employee stress has also been alleviated by offering additional leave with pay due to family obligations that prevent an employee from working a full 40-hour week (because school/daycare is closed).**



**The Nebraska Safety Council (NeSC)** is located in Lincoln, serving all of Nebraska since 1961, with a mission of providing education and leadership to empower safety and health.



The COVID-19 plan went into action on March 16, with all staff beginning to work remotely from their homes that day. **A weekly schedule was created to allow one staff member certain time frames each day for office work.** Sanitation supplies are provided, and each staff must clean their work area and anything that is touched in the office. No face-to-face meetings are allowed to occur, and in-person trainings that are deemed essential (e.g., N95 mask fit training) are organized to abide by social distancing guidelines and only offered to health care and public safety personnel. Instructors must go directly to the training location, enter the building in full PPE, and then remove PPE at their car and store it in a garbage sack before returning home.



Beginning April 1, staff were not allowed to travel for work (except for essential trainings noted above). Staff traveling for personal reasons out-of-state by plane, train, or other mass transit are required to quarantine for fourteen days upon return. Staff with COVID-19 symptoms or with sick family members must also quarantine for at least fourteen days before entering the office. **Arrangements have been made for a 50% discount on hotel for staff that may have a diagnosed family member and need to remove themselves from their home for safety. NeSC purchased cloth masks for all staff members for their personal use.**

To maintain personal health and connections with each other, weekly staff calls are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays to check in and provide updates on work successes and challenges. The CEO has one-on-one calls with each staff once or twice a week, and three days each week, a health coach leads a 45-minute web conference workout for all staff. Employees have also been reminded of employee assistance services and encouraged to use them as necessary.



**For more COVID-19 employer resources, please  
click on the partner organization logos below:**

