

On April 16, 2020, Governor Reynolds ordered employers in NE Iowa to take additional steps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in reaction to the growing number of cases in that region.

The order applies to all employers with employees present in Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Grundy, Howard, Jones, Linn, and Winneshiek counties.

The order requires these employers to:

1. Evaluate whether any more of their employees can feasibly work remotely and to the extent reasonable, employers must take steps to enable employees to work from home.
2. All businesses or other employers remaining open with in-person operations shall take reasonable precautions to ensure the health of their employees and members of the public, including appropriate employee screening, social distancing practices, and increased cleaning and hygiene practices.

To assist members in their compliance with these directives, ABC offers the following guidance for members both who are located in Northeast Iowa and those who may have worksites in the impacted area even though employment may be based remotely:

- Allow all office staff to work remotely, if possible, and if not, reinforce the concept of social distancing in the office;
- **Restrict the number of employees in a single vehicle to 1 person per vehicle** (The “optics” of several individuals sitting two and three across in a vehicle invites question – and perhaps a cell-phone picture of the individuals and the vehicle –with your name.);
- Encourage employees to self-check their temperature prior to reporting to work, or require all employees to have their temperatures measured at the worksite. Consider a “self-check” list – has the person been exposed to anyone who has been diagnosed; has the person traveled recently; has the person been in a social gathering of 10 or more people or of people not from the same household;
- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) MUST be sent home immediately and not allowed to return until a health care professional clears them to return to work;
- Require all employees to wear a face mask or similar face covering while working;
- Require all employees to maintain 6 feet of distance from one another, as work duties permit.
- Clean and disinfect all work areas and work tools and equipment before and after each use;
- Provide employees with access to hand sanitizer and hand washing stations.
- When holding safety meetings or training, limit the amount of employees attending each session and require all employees to maintain the six foot distance;
- Stagger lunch and breaks to limit group size;
- Suspend or re-sequence tasks that do not allow for social distancing for a later date if possible.

By implementing these types of safety protocols, your business increases its chance of limiting the spread of COVID-19 and remaining open during these challenging times.

We encourage our members to review the materials on the various federal programs on paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave that have been presented in our webinars.

To state the obvious, these are not “ordinary times.” Businesses have an obligation to follow the general orders of Governor Reynolds (to state the obvious, we all hold licenses of various sorts issued by the State of Iowa) as well as to adhere to the general duty of all employers imposed under occupational safety and health laws.

ABC of Iowa stands ready to assist you as we all face these times together.