

 <p><b>SAFETY DIRECTIVE</b></p>	NUMBER: 2020-1 SUBJECT: <b>COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS</b>
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It is likely that by now you have heard of or read about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As Governor Cuomo announced, there is no reason for undue anxiety and the general risk remains low in New York State at this time. Everyday preventative actions, however, can help stop the spread of this and other respiratory viruses.

**What is it?**

COVID-19 is a large family of viruses that can cause respiratory illness in humans. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), patients with confirmed infections have reported mild to severe respiratory illnesses with symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath. CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Those with compromised immune systems or preexisting respiratory conditions are likely to have more severe symptoms. COVID-19 is most commonly spread just like any other virus. Coughing and sneezing disperses it through the air within 6 feet of the infected person. It can also spread by close personal contact, such as touching, shaking hands, or contact with surfaces with the virus on it. You then can become infected by touching your eyes, nose or mouth after contact exposure.

**Who is at risk?**

As viruses go, you are less susceptible to contract COVID-19 than the regular flu. The current risk categories involve traveling to regions where significant outbreaks have occurred. These areas currently include China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong. If you have traveled to or come into contact with someone who has traveled to those areas, the potential for exposure is present. If you have not exhibited signs and symptoms after 14 days, the risk that you have been exposed is low. If you developed signs and symptoms and have not traveled or had contact with someone who has traveled to those areas, then the risk that you have contracted COVID-19 is negligible.

**How do we prevent the spread of viruses, including Coronavirus?**

New York State Thruway Authority (Authority) employees should use these simple personal preventative steps:

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol based).
- **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.
- Keep food covered or in closed containers.

- Clean and disinfect frequently as follows:
  - Clean your personal work space daily or per shift including:
    - toll drawers and toll machines;
    - desks and phones; and
    - vehicle operator compartments (e.g., steering wheel, controls, etc.).
  - Clean your kitchen and break areas daily.

### **Illness reporting**

If you are experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, and a fever greater than 100°F, contact your supervisor prior to reporting to work. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms and may have traveled to areas of concern or have been in contact with somebody who has traveled to these areas should remain home and contact a health care provider.

### **Moving forward**

Supervisors are responsible to share this important information with every employee. The Bureau of Labor Relations and Employee Safety is currently working with the Governor's Office and other agencies to develop more detailed protocols for the Authority to help protect its employees and customers. Preventing the spread of viruses requires everyone to be vigilant and considerate of others by adhering to the preventative steps listed above. The Bureau of Labor Relations and Employee Safety is always available to assist and answer questions and can be reached at (518) 471-4495.

### **References:**

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

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

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

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/about/transmission.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>