

Fact Sheet and Resources for Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Updated 6/08/20

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and has now spread around the world, including in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “Coronavirus Disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC) (<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-%282005%29-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-%282019-ncov%29>).

On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

On March 11, 2020 the WHO characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic, elevating its response urgency and acknowledging its likely spread to all countries around the world. The announcement can be found at <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national emergency to convey to the public the seriousness of this situation and to make available resources and other support that can be directed to protect communities across the country. This designation will make up to \$50B available to support state and local communities to combat this disease. The President also called on states and hospitals to open their emergency management centers; gave broad new authorities to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to waive laws and regulations that hinder hospitals and doctors from effectively doing their jobs; announced the approval of new tests for the virus and a process by which people can be triaged and tested quickly; and waived interest on government-back student loans until further notice.

On March 13, 2020, the CDC issued a revised *Interim Guidance: Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)* intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning mass gatherings or community events in the U.S. such as concerts, festivals, conferences or sporting events. The Guidance recommended cancelling community-wide mass gatherings (for example, >250 people; the cutoff threshold is at the discretion of community leadership based on the current circumstances the community is facing and the nature of the event) or moving to smaller groupings; and cancelling gatherings of more than 10 people for organizations that serve higher-risk populations in locations where there is minimal-to-moderate level of community transmission. The

Guidance was updated on March 29, 2020 and can be found at https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Mass-Gatherings-Documents_FINAL.pdf.

On March 15, 2020, the CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommended that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States. Information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html> and the updated *Guidance* at https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Mass-Gatherings-Documents_FINAL.pdf.

On March 16, 2020, the White House and CDC issued guidance to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Titled *15 Days to Slow the Spread*, the guidance asks all people to work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible; avoid social gatherings in groups of 10 or more people; avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts; avoid discretionary travel; avoid visiting nursing homes or retirement centers; and practice good hygiene. The Guidance can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/15-days03.16.20-coronavirus-guidance-8.5x11-315pm-1.pdf>.



On March 28, 2020, the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), which is located within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, issued a [*Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During Covid-19 Response*](#). CISA developed an initial list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help state and local officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The list informed critical infrastructure community decision-making to determine the sectors, sub-sectors, segments, or critical functions that should continue normal operations, appropriately modified to account for CDC workforce and customer protection guidance.

The memorandum identified a list of workers who conduct a range of operations and services that are **essential** to continued critical infrastructure viability, including staffing operations centers, maintaining and repairing critical infrastructure, operating call centers, working construction, and performing management functions, among others. The industries they support represent, but are not necessarily limited to, medical and healthcare, telecommunications, information technology systems, defense, **food and agriculture**, transportation and logistics, energy, **water and wastewater**, law enforcement, and **public works**.

The memorandum also recognized that the ultimate authority lies with state, local, tribal and territorial governments. Many states, particularly those with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, have issued restrictions on business operations and have their own definitions of essential businesses/workers. As such, the list provided by CISA should be considered “advisory in nature” and is not intended to be “authoritative or exhaustive”.

This memorandum, which was updated on May 19, 2020, can be found at https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Version_3.1_CISA_Guidance_on_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workers.pdf. CISA has identified a number of industries or sectors that it considers are essential to “continued critical infrastructure viability.” The most obvious sectors in which WWEMA members are engaged include: public works, water and wastewater, chemical, and critical manufacturing. A complete list of sectors, enumerated by CISA, can be found at <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>. This list includes the categories of Public Works, Water and Wastewater, Chemical, and Critical Manufacturing that have direct implications to the water sector.

On April 2, 2020, the White House and CDC issued new guidance to slow the spread of coronavirus. Titled, *30 Days to Slow the Spread*, the guidance extends the original *15 Days to Slow the Spread* guidance for an additional 30 days, until April 30, 2020. The Guidance can be found at https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf.

On April 8, 2020, the CDC issued *Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19* to ensure continuity of operations of essential functions. CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. A potential exposure means having a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic. The *Guidance* lists steps that should be taken prior to and during shift work including temperature checks, regular monitoring, wearing a mask, social distancing, and disinfecting and cleaning work spaces and can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/critical-workers-implementing-safety-practices.pdf>.

On April 17, 2020, the Trump Administration announced a phased approach to reopening the country, noting that some states may begin to open even before May 1, 2020. Although general guidance, the President indicated that it will be left up to the individual state Governors to determine when and how to begin reopening their states. The three-phase approach focuses on symptoms, cases, and hospitalizations showing downward trajectories for a 14-day period, and depends on robust testing programs (including emerging antibody testing), and contact tracing. The approach is based on up-to-date data and readiness, and mitigates risk of resurgence, protects the most vulnerable, and can be implemented on a statewide or county-by-county basis by the Governors. A copy of the *Opening Up America Again Guidelines* can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WHReopeningDoc41720.pdf>. Additional information can be found at the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/index.html>. More state-specific information can be found at the National Governors Association (NGA) website at <https://www.nga.org/coronavirus/>. Specific actions being taken by states can be found at the NGA website at <https://www.nga.org/coronavirus/#actions>.



GovPredict created a *Coronavirus Legislative Tracking Center* that includes a [map](#) showing every state's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). It's a free resource as a public service and tracks Bills, Governor's Executive Orders, and compares Bills across issue areas such as workers compensation and targeted aid. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) also created a website called *NCSL Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources for States* at <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/ncsl-coronavirus-covid-19-resources.aspx>. This site provides a comprehensive resource for state legislators with timely responses to state research requests and the essential knowledge needed to guide state action. This page is updated daily to reflect new resources in policy areas ranging from employment to health care costs and access. It has a vast amount of good information and links that readers may find useful.



In addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has created a [State-by-State Business Reopening Guidance](#) website with an interactive state map and state guides to help track the differences across each state and provide the latest guidance and information to America's employers. You will find the latest guidelines, timelines, and other critical information for businesses aiming to restart safely and sustainably amid the pandemic, as well as a link to the latest information for employers in that state.

On April 20, 2020, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released a *Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies* aligning Federal Agency operations with the National Guidelines for *Opening Up America Again* (<https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FedWorkersOMBMemo042020.pdf>) in an effort to move the Federal workforce safely back from telework.



On May 14, 2020, the CDC issued guidance titled *CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again*. This document, which briefly summarizes CDC's initiatives, activities, and tools in support of the Whole-of-Government response to COVID-19, can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response-1.pdf>. The brochure form of the document can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>.


To contain or at least slow the spread of the outbreak, the CDC has urged people to regularly employ everyday health precautions that are used to curtail other viral transmissions including the flu. These include frequent and thorough hand washing, avoiding large crowds and cruises, keeping a safe space from others, and staying home when sick. For more vulnerable populations, additional measures such as stocking up on supplies and medicine and staying home as much as possible to reduce exposure risk are urged.

In addition to the WHO and CDC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has compiled information on its website about COVID-19 as it relates to drinking water and wastewater. At the site, they answer questions about tap water safety and state that Americans should continue to use (including for hand washing) and drink tap water without the need to boil the water first. Additionally, they note the WHO has not detected COVID-19 in drinking water supplies and that they have no evidence that the virus has been transmitted via sewage systems, regardless of whether the water is treated.





This Fact Sheet is intended to provide resources and information that can help WWEMA members and others in the water industry stay up-to-date on the rapidly evolving situation surrounding COVID-19. We provide here a list of primary resources to help you and your staff make appropriate workforce and public health decisions.

Web Links:


The **World Health Organization (WHO)**: <https://www.who.int/>




- Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/>
- Additional Information
https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
-  Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19
<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

- 30 days to Slow the Spread
https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf
- Interim Guidance: Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Mass-Gatherings-Documents_FINAL.pdf
- Keeping the Workplace, Schools, Home, and Commercial Establishments Safe
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>
- Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>
- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM25771
-  Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting – Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes (CDC and EPA Issued 4/28/20)
<https://www.epa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CleaningandDisinfecting.pdf> and
https://www.epa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf
-  Workplaces During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Tool to assist in reopening decision)
<https://www.epa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/workplace-decision-tree.pdf>
-  CDC Posters
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>
-  Guidance for Reducing Health Risks to Workers Handling Human Waste or Sewage
https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html
- Water Transmission and COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**: <https://www.epa.gov/>

- Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>
- Disinfectants to Use Against COVID-19
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
-  Resources for Disinfectants and Water and Wastewater
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

-  Restoring Water Quality in Buildings for Reopening
https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/final_checklist_for_maintaining_building_water_quality_5-6-2020.pdf
-  Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use
https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/final_maintaining_building_water_quality_5.6.20-v2.pdf
-  Incident Action Checklist – Pandemic Incidents
<https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Pandemic-IAC.pdf>

Major Coronavirus Legislation

Five major pieces of legislation have been passed to address the coronavirus pandemic; they are summarized below.

Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act

Signed on March 6, 2020 by President Trump, the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#) is an \$8.3 billion aid package that includes:

- \$3 billion for the research and development of vaccines and diagnostics
- \$2.2 billion to fund public-health programs
- \$1 billion for medical supplies and other preparedness measures.
- Low-interest Small Business Administration loans

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Signed on March 18, 2020 by President Trump, the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#) addresses not only immediate public health needs but also the related financial consequences. Key provisions in this legislation, which became effective April 2, 2020 and runs through December 31, 2020, are:

- Free testing for coronavirus under health insurance plans with no need for pre-authorization.
- *Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act*. Provides two weeks (10 work days) of paid leave to employees working for a business or government employer with fewer than 500 people for certain COVID-19 issues, such as self-isolation due to COVID-19 diagnosis, to obtain a medical diagnosis of suspected COVID-19, or to care for family member. It would guarantee 80 hours of paid sick leave for full-time workers; part-time workers will receive a prorated amount. Employees taking leave to take care of another person would receive only two-thirds of their standard pay.
- *Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA)*. EFMLEA amends the *Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)*. Employees working for a business or government employer with fewer than 500 people who have been employed for at least 30 days are eligible to receive 12 weeks of leave for qualifying COVID-19 absences. There is a small business exemption to allow the U.S. Secretary of Labor to issue regulations exempting small business with fewer than 50 employees when new requirements would jeopardize the business.

- Employers would receive a refundable tax credit to offset the employer share of Social Security taxes equal to 100 percent of qualified paid sick leave related to the above provisions.
- Additional provisions for populations vulnerable to food insecurity. The Women's, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program will continue and the "Food Stamps" program will be expanded on a temporary basis to cover both the poor *and* jobless workers.
- Emergency fund transfers from the Federal government to the State government Unemployment Insurance Funds (UIFs) to address the likely number of workers filing claims. Specifically, there will be \$1 billion for states, including \$500 million for administrative costs and \$500 million for states that have unemployment rates of at least 10 percent.

More information can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave>.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) ACT

Signed on March 27, 2020 by President Trump, the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) is a \$2 Trillion stimulus bill that provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. It provides expanded unemployment coverage, loans and grants to businesses, and direct payments to individuals and families earning under a certain amount of income among many other provisions including:

- \$1,200 to each American making \$75,000 a year or less.
- Adds \$600/week to unemployment benefits for four months.
- Gives \$100 billion to hospitals and health providers and increases Medicare reimbursements for treating coronavirus.
- Gives \$750 million to food banks, to Puerto Rico and the other territories for food assistance, and to programs for food distribution on American Indian reservations.
- Makes \$500 billion of loans or investments to businesses, states and municipalities, and \$32 billion in grants to the airline industry.
- Provides relief for those with federally-backed mortgages.
- Delays student loan payments.

Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act

Signed on April 24, 2020 by President Trump, the [Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act](#) provides \$484 billion in additional funding to replenish and supplement key programs under the CARES Act, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), small business disaster loans and grants, hospitals and health care providers, and testing. Provisions include:

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP): Appropriates an additional \$321 billion in funding, with \$60 billion set aside for small, midsize, and community lenders (including minority lenders).

Disaster Loans Program: Appropriates an additional \$50 billion for the Disaster Loans Program and an additional \$10 billion for Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Grants.

HHS Hospital and Provider Grants under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund: Provides an additional \$75 billion to support the need for COVID-19 related expenses and lost revenue due to coronavirus.

Testing: Provides \$25 billion for the HHS Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund for necessary expenses to research, develop, validate, manufacture, purchase, administer and expand capacity for COVID-19 tests. Requires the Administration to create a national strategy to provide assistance to states for testing and increasing testing capacity.

Testing also requires states, localities, territories, and tribes to outline their own testing plans, as well as plans to ease COVID-19 community mitigation strategies. Requires the Secretary to issue reports on testing, which must include de-identified and disaggregated data on demographic characteristics, including, race, ethnicity, age, sex, geographic region and other relevant factors of individuals tested for or diagnosed with COVID-19, as well as information on the number and rates of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths as a result of COVID-19.

Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act

The *Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act*, which can be found at <https://wwema.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PPPFA060520BILLS-116hr7010enr.pdf>, was signed into law by President Trump on June 5, 2020, providing small businesses with more time and more flexibility to use their Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans. The new law:

- Increases the amount that can be used on rent, utilities, and other overhead costs from 25 percent to 40 percent; and it lowers the amount that must be used on payroll costs from 75 percent to 60 percent;
- Extends the period of time that small businesses can use their loan from 8 weeks to 24 weeks and extends the entire program to December 31, 2020;
- Allows small businesses to receive loan forgiveness even if they had trouble rehiring employees or if they have not been able to return to a full operating status;
- Allows small businesses to repay any amount that is not forgiven over five years, instead of just two years; and
- Allows small businesses with PPP loans to defer their payroll taxes as provided in the CARES Act.

The Paycheck Protection Program provides small businesses - including restaurants, hotels, and certain non-profits - with zero-fee loans of up to \$10 million to cover payroll and other operating expenses.

Presidential Actions



Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

On March 13, 2020, in response to the coronavirus pandemic, President Trump declared a national emergency under section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The Presidential order can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/letter-president-donald-j-trump-emergency-determination-stafford-act/>. The directive encouraged all state and local governments to activate their Emergency Operations Centers and to review their emergency preparedness plans and instructed FEMA to continue to review all ways in which it can provide assistance to states. It also instructed Secretary Mnuchin to provide relief from tax deadlines to Americans who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 emergency, as appropriate, pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 7508A(a).

Defense Production Act of 1950

On March 18, 2020, President Trump invoked the Defense Production Act of 1950 as part of his response to the coronavirus pandemic, aiming to boost private industry production of supplies needed for the health crisis. The [Defense Production Act of 1950](#) was signed by President Harry S. Truman amid concerns about supplies and equipment during the Korean War. It's been invoked multiple times since then to help the federal government for a range of emergencies including war, hurricanes and terrorism prevention.

The Act gives the Federal Government broad authority to direct private companies to meet the needs of the national defense. Over the decades, the law's powers have been understood to encompass not only times of war but also domestic emergency preparedness and recovery from terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

The Act authorizes the President to require companies to prioritize government contracts and orders seen as necessary for the national defense, with the goal of ensuring that the private sector is producing enough goods needed to meet a war effort or other national emergency. It also authorizes the President to use loans, direct purchases, and other incentives to boost the production of critical goods and essential materials. Other provisions authorize the federal government to establish voluntary agreements with private industry and to block foreign mergers and acquisitions seen as harmful to national security.

WWEMA continues to follow the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly how it relates to moving forward with the reopening of America. We will continue gathering and sharing updated information from trusted agencies and resources and will continue to keep our members up-to-date on the evolving health situation. Questions, concerns, or suggestions for topics to include in this Fact Sheet should be directed to WWEMA Executive Director, Vanessa M. Leiby at vanessa@wwema.org; 703-444-1777 (O); 240-678-4623 (M).