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Проект ЄС–МОП «На шляху до безпечної, здорової та задекларованої праці в Україні»
EU-ILO Project “Towards safe, healthy and declared work in Ukraine”



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Європейським Союзом

► Round-table “COVID-19: Hazards and Effective Response”

OSH in times of pandemic – what to do at workplaces?

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COVID-19 is also an OSH issue...

- ▶ Coronavirus can be **introduced into workplace** through workers, suppliers, clients, visitors, public and/or contaminated objects;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted** between workers or between them and suppliers, clients, visitors and public during **within workplaces during work activities**;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted** to workers suppliers, clients, visitors and public through contaminated surfaces and objects **at workplaces during work activities**;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted out of the workplaces** through workers, suppliers, clients, visitors, public and/or contaminated objects

Implementation of an adequate OSH management system at business level can mitigate the impact of COVID-19, save lives and ensure business continuity!

Coronavirus – an occupational hazard

- ▶ Coronavirus is an occupational hazard, because it's a biological agent that might be present at the workplace and has the potential to cause damages to workers' health
- ▶ It can be transmitted:
 - Directly: through the transfer of respiratory droplets from the infected person to other(s) that are close, released when the infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks;
 - Indirectly: through contact with material components of the work (surfaces, tools, work equipment, raw-materials, etc.) or hands contaminated with respiratory secretions of an infected person and later transfer to the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose or eyes of other(s).

Although the concrete preventive and protective measures aimed at eliminating or reducing the occupational risk of coronavirus contagion depend on its specific nature, the risk management process itself (hazard identification, risk estimation, risk valuation and risk control phases) is precisely the same that should be applied to any other occupational risk.

Main applicable EU and International Labour Standards and Guidelines

- ▶ ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- ▶ ILO Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164)
- ▶ ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)
- ▶ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work
- ▶ Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 18 September 2000, on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work

► Employers' main responsibilities according to referred standards

- ▶ To take (and continuously adjust to changing circumstances) the measures to ensure workers' OSH in every aspect related to work, with strictly compliance with the hierarchical and sequential GPP¹, in particular, avoiding risks and assessing the risks that cannot be avoided;
- ▶ Ensure that workplaces, machinery, equipment, processes, chemical, physical and biological substances under their control are safe and without risk to workers' safety and health;
- ▶ Ensure the organization and functioning of workplace OSH services;
- ▶ Ensure that workers and their representatives are consulted, informed, and trained on OSH;
- ▶ Ensure the surveillance of workers' health;
- ▶ Provide workers with adequate PPEs (at no cost to workers);
- ▶ Provide for measures to deal with emergencies and accidents, including first-aid arrangements.

GPP: 1). Avoid risks; 2) Assess the risks that cannot be avoided; 3) Combat risks at source; 4) Adapt the work to the individual; 5) Adapt to technical progress; 6) Replace the dangerous by non or less dangerous; 7) Develop a coherent overall prevention policy, 8) Give collective protective measures priority over individual; 9) Give appropriate instructions to the workers.

Workers' rights and responsibilities

- ▶ Right to remove themselves without undue consequences, from a work situation which they have reasonable justification to believe that it presents an imminent and serious danger to their life or health;
- ▶ Right to be consulted, make enquiries and to receive information and training on OSH;
- ▶ To take care of his own OSH and that of other persons affected by his acts or omissions at work;
- ▶ Immediately inform employer of situations that may represent a serious and immediate danger to OSH and of any shortcomings in the protection arrangements;
- ▶ Make correct use of means of production (e.g., work equipment, tools, dangerous substances, etc.) and PPEs;
- ▶ Refrain from disconnecting, changing or removing arbitrarily safety devices and use them correctly;
- ▶ Co-operate with the employer in the field of OSH (e.g. comply with OSH instructions and procedures; use PPE correctly; report to supervisor hazardous situation; etc.).

OSH Risks Assessment

Assess all occupational risks to which employees are (or might be) exposed, regarding all work activities, processes, workstations, equipment, substances and products and identify the exposed workers, including:

- ▶ All the risks to which workers were exposed before COVID-19 outbreak and that still remain;
- ▶ The risk of coronavirus contagion, which level depends on:
 - Probability of exposure of workers to coronavirus, considering COVID-19 characteristics (i.e., transmission patterns) and of their contact with infectious persons (e.g., colleagues, suppliers, clients, visitors or public) or contaminated environments/materials (laboratory samples, waste, work equipment, tools, etc.).
 - The severity of resulting health outcomes, considering individual factors (age, underlying diseases and health conditions), and measures available to control the impact of the infection.
- ▶ The risks resulting from the preventive and protective measures against coronavirus contagion (and their interaction), including: psychosocial risks (stress, domestic violence and isolation, associated with teleworking/social distancing); ergonomic risks, and exposure to chemical agents (due to increased use of cleaning/hygiene products).

Occupational Risks Prevention Plan

On the basis of the risk assessment, an **Occupational Risks Prevention Plan** should be formulated and implemented. This plan should contain, at least, the following information:

- ▶ Identified Hazards
- ▶ Risks assessed and their respective level
- ▶ Most appropriate OSH Preventive and protective measures to implement
- ▶ Timetable and resources needed to implement each measure
- ▶ Responsible persons for the implementation of each measure
- ▶ Objectives, indicators and targets regarding the implementation of each measure;
- ▶ Procedures for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the measures

To control OSH risks (including coronavirus contagion), OSH preventive and protective measures should be implemented to reduce their occurrence probability and the severity of their consequences!

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Physical distancing:

- ▶ New principles of social conduct: refraining from hugging, kissing or shaking hands;
- ▶ Re-organize the work in order to ensure physical distancing between people that, otherwise, would interact closely at work (e.g., workers, customers, suppliers, visitor, public), through:
 - Teleworking, workers' paid dispensation or anticipation of paid annual leave periods (where possible)
 - Lagged working hours or additional work shifts (with fewer people each);
 - Substitution of physical contacts by phone, email or virtual meetings (online) contacts;
 - Ensure the maximum distance possible between workstations;
 - Avoid crowding of people at workplace: cancellation of gatherings, social or sport events; institution of lagged hours for the use of common areas/spaces (e.g., cafeteria, rooms, library);

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Physical distancing (Cont.):

- Limit the number of persons (workers, clients or public) allowed to be simultaneously in a given space to a fraction of its capacity (e.g., 1/3) or to a given ratio per square meter (0,04 per sm);
- Limit the minimum distance between people (shop, airport, pharmacy, information service, etc.) to a specific number of meters (1 m in open space; 2 m indoor) and put appropriate safety signs;
- Forbid the presence of public or customers at workplaces and deliver products at the premises door or at customers' domicile, but without the entrance of the worker at the customers' premises;
- Prevent suppliers from entering workplace by receiving orders (re.g., aw materials) at the entrance;
- Implement different circulation paths: different enter and exit doors and circulation paths; different paths per circulation direction, etc;
- Install physical barriers (glass or acrylic windows, shutters, etc.), especially in front-office workstations.

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Hygiene:

- ▶ Promote good respiratory hygiene at the workplace (e.g., covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze);
- ▶ Ensure easily accessible places to wash hands with soap and water and paper towels to dry them;
- ▶ Provide workers with easily accessible alcohol-based antiseptic solution for hands hygiene;
- ▶ Promoting a culture of handwashing and the adoption of adequate basic procedures for hands hygiene;
- ▶ Prohibit eating or drinking in working areas;
- ▶ Promote the non-sharing between workers of personal, work and domestic items (cell phones, headphones, PPEs, crockery and kitchen utensils, clothes, uniforms, towels etc.) and food.

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Cleaning:

- Promote a culture of regularly cleaning, with adequate detergent and/or disinfectant, the following:
 - Surfaces of desks, telephones and keyboards;
 - Workstations, work equipment, work tools and PPEs (if reusable and appropriate);
 - Doorknobs, handrail, counters, light switches, elevator buttons, vending machines, payment terminals, dispensers, etc;
 - Common areas such as toilettes, rest rooms, cafeteria, meeting rooms, etc.

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Information, training and communication:

- Provide information and training to managers, workers and their representatives on:
 - The risks to which they are exposed and the adopted measures to prevent their exposure, in particular, to coronavirus;
 - Physical distancing measures, principles of social conduct, respiratory hygiene, procedures for hands hygiene and cleaning of premises and material components of work;
 - How to act in case of Covid-19 infection;
 - Correct use, maintenance and disposal of PPE;
 - Updates regarding the COVID-19 situation at the workplace, region or country;
 - Their right to remove themselves from a work situation that poses an imminent and serious danger for life or health.

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Health surveillance and response mechanisms:

- ▶ Employers should safeguard the surveillance of workers' health, according to local health authorities guidelines and, in particular, ensure that:
 - Workers with suspected symptoms of Covid-19 do not come to the workplace
 - In case of development of Covid-19 symptoms at the work site: worker communicates situation to supervisor and moves the "isolation area" defined in the contingency plan, while awaiting transfer to an appropriate health facility; worker or employer contact health authorities; employer notifies OSH services/occupational physician and adequately disinfect the workplace; provide health surveillance of persons who have been in close contact with the infected worker;
 - Expand workers' access to paid sick leave, sickness benefits, and parental/care leave and inform all workers

► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can be used to mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Whenever the implementation of other measures is not enough to control the risks, the employer should also, when appropriate:
 - Provide adequate and free of charge PPEs to workers, taking into account the results of the risk assessment and the eventual need using simultaneously several PPEs;
 - Provide information and training on the best way to use and maintain the needed PPEs.

Conclusions:

- ▶ Coronavirus is an occupational hazard;
- ▶ The transmission of coronavirus at work is an occupational risk;
- ▶ Employers have the responsibility to assess the risks resulting from the exposure of workers to coronavirus and to implement the most adequate OSH preventive and protective measures to control it;
- ▶ The implementation of adequate OSH management systems contributes to reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic or of any other type of biological agent (bacterium, fungus or virus) on workers' health and business continuity.

World OSH Day 2020 – “Stop the pandemic: Safety and health at work can save lives”

Key available resources and materials:

- ▶ [Report for World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020 - In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work;](#)
- ▶ [PPT Presentation of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020;](#)
- ▶ [Video;](#)
- ▶ [Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at Work ACTION CHECKLIST;](#)
- ▶ [Poster for World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020.](#)



Q&A



Contacts

Дякую за увагу!

Thank you for your attention!





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