

COVID-19 Control and Prevention

Retail Industry

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. TOSHA is committed to protecting the health and safety of Tennessee's workers and workplaces during these unprecedented times. The following information may help prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19.

While there is no specific TOSHA standard covering COVID-19 exposure, some TOSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupational exposure. Among the most relevant are:

- The General Duty Clause which requires employers to furnish to each worker "employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."
- The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards requiring the use gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection for specific job tasks.
- The Sanitation standards which require employers provide soap, hot and cold (or tepid) water, and individual towels/air blowers be made available in the workplace. The employer is required to permit employees to utilize toilet facilities as needed. In addition, it requires that all workplaces be kept clean to the extent that the nature of the work allows.

Failure to take reasonable actions, such as those listed below, may be a violation of the TOSH act.

The [TOSHA COVID-19](#) webpage offers information, guidance, and resources for employers and workers on the control and prevention of COVID-19 per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visit the CDC's page, [Resources for Business and Employers](#) frequently for more information as it is continually updated.

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures such as:

- Train employees about steps they can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19
 - Employees should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Cover mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing, or use the inside of the elbow
 - Discard of used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water
 - Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to workplaces and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen
- Provide alcohol-based hand rubs with at least 60% alcohol at convenient locations throughout the work area
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects such as door handles, keypads, carts, etc. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface. Provide disinfectant wipes in near proximity to commonly used surfaces
- Minimize sharing of tools/equipment when possible
- Allow employees to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent spread of the virus
- Space employees approximately 6 feet or 2 meters apart when possible
 - Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals (in accordance with wage and hour laws) to maintain social distancing
 - Temporarily move/reposition workstations
 - Increase physical distance between employees and customers by installing plastic shields or barriers
 - Utilize curbside pick-up or delivery
- Increase ventilation rates provided by HVAC system, increase percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.
- Install high efficiency air filters
- Encourage customers to wear face coverings inside store

For additional information, or to report any safety and health concerns, visit www.tnosh.gov or call 1-800-249-8510.

