

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Members of the HSAWCF
FROM: Mary Penz, HSAWCF Administrator
DATE: April 3, 2020
SUBJECT: **NEWS AND UPDATES FROM HSAWCF**

In order to address the rapid changing situation regarding COVID-19, the HSAWCF is reaching out to inform our members regarding changes and updates related workers compensation and other related matters.

COVID – 19

Typically, claims from a communicable disease are not compensable, like the flu or the chicken pox, the Corona virus is a communicable disease that can be contracted anywhere. It would not be considered to be a work-related illness, however. Emergency Rules as issued by Governor Whitmer and the Workers Disability Compensation Agency have allowed for certain exceptions be made in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 30, 2020, the Governor issued new Emergency Rules to address injuries to first responder employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also defining what employees are classified as first responders. In addition, the Michigan Workers Disability Compensation Agency issued a memorandum on March 31, 2020 regarding medical treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A brief outline of the Governor's order to address first responders is as follows:

Rule 1: First Responders - Injuries to first response employees.

Unless proven otherwise, a first response employee suffers a personal injury that arises out of and in the course of employment if the first response employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, whether by a physician or as a result of a test.

Rule 2: Defining a first responder per the order is as follows:

- 1) As used in these rules, "first response employee" means any of the following:
 - a) A person working in ambulance operations and advanced mobile emergency care services, county medical care facilities, emergency services, emergency medical services, homes for the aged, hospices, hospitals, or nursing homes.
 - b) A person working in a home health agency or visiting nurse association.
 - c) Any person working as a physician, physician assistant, nurse, emergency medical technician, paramedic, or respiratory therapist.
 - d) Any police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, on-call members of a fire department, volunteer civil defense workers, on-call members of a life support agency, or members of an emergency rescue team, as those terms are used in the worker's disability compensation act of 1969, I 969 PA317, MCL 418. I 01 to 418.94 l.
 - e) A member of the state police or an officer of the motor carrier enforcement division of the department of the state police.
 - f) A state correctional officer or local corrections officer.

I am attaching a newsletter as prepared by Hanba Lazar that outlines this order as well as other employer information that you may find useful. On pages 8 and 9 you will find the information related to the Emergency Rules related to workers compensation including the list of those considered first responders. Realizing that our members have a variety of job descriptions, classifications and responsibilities, your agency may have employees that fit into this category. If you have a potential claim situation that arises you may reach out to Debra Burnet at CRS for guidance on filing the claim. dburnett@crsmi.com
We are encouraging members to do this in an effort to help ensure they are relaying the most accurate message possible.

HSAWCF and CRS will be reviewing each claim on a case by case situation. If a claim is filed, CRS will need to gather information about the employee's job description and tasks that they have been performing.

In addition to the Emergency Rules stated above, the Workers Disability Compensation Bureau issued a memorandum on how insurance carriers should be handling certain medical care needed by workers compensation claimants. This consideration to deliver medical services via telemedicine is made in order to reduce the risk of further spreading the COVID-19 infection.

We ask that our member use the Tele-medicine options when possible especially with new injuries or illnesses. Once the claim is filed and the adjuster is managing the claim, CRS will attempt to utilize these services, when appropriate. Members can potentially use this service for the following:

1. New claims that are not filed
2. New claims where they are not sure if the injury is occupational but they want to obtain a diagnosis/prognosis
3. Employee has exposure symptoms and they are not sure what to do
4. Depending on geographic location, an occupational clinic is not readily available
5. Treatment options are not available

Please see the attached a listing of **Telemedicine Programs /Resources** that may be used. Any questions on Telemedicine Programs can be addressed to fschmidt@crsmi.com

TELECOMMUTING – WORKING FROM HOME

With the Governor's Shelter in Place order many of your employees may now be working from home. It is important your organization develops a telecommuting policy to address this situation. Please review the attached a newsletter as provided by our TPA Comprehensive Risk Services -CRS. This newsletter addresses topics that may be included in your organizations telecommuting policy. Please keep in mind that it is best to have employees designate a specific work location in the home, this seems to work best at mitigating claims. Our TPA suggests, that if possible, have your employees describe their work area at home, including taking photos of the area that you can maintain in the personnel records. It is also important to set up job duty and work hour expectations with your employees as well as maintaining regular contact with them to help keep them engaged.

If you have any questions regarding this you may contact ksmylie@crsmi.com

PAYROLL AUDITS

Just a reminder that The Aprise Group will contact you to assist them in completing the 2019 HSAWCF payroll audits via electronic communication as well as by phone. This correspondence and request for information will come directly from The Aprise Group. Any questions for the payroll audits should be directed to aprisegroup@aprisegroup.com

Once the payroll audits are completed a copy of the audit and billing statement will be emailed to you. We ask that you review and let us know as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at marypenz@hsawcf.com

We hope that you find this information helpful.

These are unprecedented times and if we all work together; we will get through this. The HSAWCF's organizations and their employees are most important to us. If you have any particular question or concerns for your agency please let me know. I can be reached at marypenz@hsawcf.com

Please stay safe and healthy!



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.
[Find more information here.](#)

Summary of Changes to the Guidance:

Below are changes as of March 21, 2020

- Updated cleaning and disinfection guidance
- Updated best practices for conducting social distancing
- Updated strategies and recommendations that can be implemented now to respond to COVID-19

CDC Industry Guidance

- [Resources for Airlines](#)
- [Resources for the Ship Industry](#)

OSHA/HHS Guidance

- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) 

Purpose

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about the coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The outbreak first started in China, but the virus continues to spread internationally and in [the United States](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this interim guidance as additional information becomes available.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. (CDC has provided separate guidance for [healthcare settings](#).) This guidance also provides planning considerations for community spread of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19 infection. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed coronavirus infection. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on [CDC's web page](#).

Preparing Workplaces for a COVID-19 Outbreak

Businesses and employers can prevent and [slow the spread of COVID-19](#). Employers should plan to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of disease transmission in the community and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most American workers will likely experience low (caution) or medium exposure risk levels at their job or place of employment (see [OSHA guidance for employers](#)   for more information about job risk classifications).

Businesses are strongly encouraged to coordinate with [state](#)  and [local](#)  health officials so timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses. Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies. CDC has [guidance for mitigation strategies](#)  according to the level of community transmission or impact of COVID-19.

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in their workplace. This may include activities in one or more of the following areas:

- a. reduce transmission among employees,
- b. maintain healthy business operations, and
- c. maintain a healthy work environment.

Reduce Transmission Among Employees

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#).

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work:

- See [OSHA COVID-19](#)  webpage for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and [guidance for employers](#)  , including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at [higher risk for serious illness](#), such as [older adults](#) and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.

Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.

- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

Educate employees about how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Employees can [take steps to protect themselves](#) at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at [higher risk for complications](#).
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. Learn what to do [if someone in your house is sick](#).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing](#) etiquette on the CDC website.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. 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.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.

Maintain Healthy Business Operations

Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.

Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.

- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.
- Employers that do not currently offer sick leave to some or all of their employees may want to draft non-punitive "emergency sick leave" policies.
- Employers should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely manner.

- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the [Department of Labor's](#) and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's](#) websites).
- Connect employees to employee assistance program (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources as needed. Employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services, for example, to cope with the death of a loved one.

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from [childcare programs and K-12 schools](#).

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Consider establishing policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing should be implemented if recommended by state and local health authorities. Social distancing means avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework)
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)
- Downsizing operations

- Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
- Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery

Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their COVID-19 response plan based on local conditions.

Maintain a healthy work environment

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase ventilation rates.
- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#)   . Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. 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.

Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility:

- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

Advise employees before traveling to take additional preparations:

- Check the [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from countries with travel advisories, and information for aircrew, can be found on the [CDC website](#).
- Advise employees to [check themselves for symptoms](#) of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

Take care when attending meetings and gatherings:

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary.
- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

Resources for more information:

CDC Guidance

- [COVID-19 Website](#)
- [What You Need to Know About COVID-19](#) 
- [What to Do If You Are Sick With COVID-19](#) 
- [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings](#)
- [Health Alert Network](#)
- [Travelers' Health Website](#)
- [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's](#) 
- [Small Business International Travel Resource Travel Planner](#) 
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Ships](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Airlines and Airline crew](#)

- [Persons at Higher Risk of Severe Illness](#)

Other Federal Agencies and Partners

- [OSHA COVID-19 Website](#) 
- [OSHA Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)  

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)



Hanba&Lazar

Attorneys and Counselors

H&L Quarterly - April 2020

What's Open?

In order to answer some common questions about what businesses can stay open during the current quarantine, the State of Michigan has created a web page to help everyone understand what employers and industries are considered critical, and will thus be allowed to continue operating. With regard to legal proceedings, trial courts in the state of Michigan have been permitted to perform only “essential functions”. While this is a somewhat vague term, an executive order from Governor Whitmer has allowed administrative courts in Michigan, including the Workers Compensation agencies, to engage in telephonic or remote hearings. Currently, we believe that Workers Compensation magistrates are willing to conduct such telephonic hearings if a case is being settled, or if absolutely necessary, if trial proceedings need to occur.

As it relates to more common place interactions, Workers Compensation magistrates Chris Slater, Lisa Woons, Robert Timmons, and David DeGraw have agreed to engage in hearings to update the court and the parties on other cases that are not imminently being settled or tried, but by appointment only. Additionally, the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court have both taken action to ensure that parties involved in litigation will not face any filing deadlines during this coronavirus shutdown. On March 26, 2020, an order from the Michigan Supreme Court indicated that all filing deadlines for these two courts would be suspended indefinitely, essentially putting all proceedings in those courts on hold until further notice. By way of contrast, the Workers Compensation system has not suspended its filing deadlines, so any time-sensitive actions or activities need to be accomplished as normal.

The list of critical business can be found at:

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98737---,00.html.

The Michigan Supreme Court order suspending filing deadlines can be found at:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/1975dc25701/c57e1bc7-7040-4dc4-896f-ac546de39545.pdf>

Governor Whitmer's order allowing remote administrative hearings can be found here:

https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90705-523024--,00.html

Submitted by Jonathan Rea

Workers' Comp Rolls On

In late February, the Michigan Court of Appeals (COA) not only got involved in a Workers Compensation case, but made a ruling that will have important precedential value. In a soon-to-be-published decision in *Smith v. Chrysler Grp.*, the COA held that the Michigan Compensation Appellate Commission (MCAC) erred by denying plaintiff-employee workers' compensation benefits. Plaintiff sought benefits for injuries he sustained in a car accident that occurred while he was traveling from his home to one of defendant's plants to conduct an audit. Defendant argued plaintiff was merely injured while traveling to work, which is not compensable under the Workers Disability Compensation Act. At trial, the magistrate found that plaintiff's injuries arose out of and in the course of his employment with defendant. The MCAC reversed, "finding that plaintiff did not establish three of the four exceptions identified in" the case of *Stark v. L.E. Myers Co.*, 58 Mich. App. 439 (1975).

As in the past, the MCAC believed that the *Stark* case was the controlling, precedential case law it needed to follow. However, the COA agreed with plaintiff, and stated that, in

their opinion, "developed caselaw now recognizes six exceptions, as set forth in Bowman... ", which is a completely separate decision from Stark. Therefore, the COA's decision was an endorsement that the framework provided in Bowman v. R.L. Coolsaet Constr. Co., 275 Mich. App. 188 (2007) was in fact the case law precedent that needed to be followed when deciding cases based on the issue of injuries occurring on the way to, or coming home from, work. The COA next examined the six exceptions found in Bowman and held that two of the exceptions were directly applicable to plaintiff, specifically that he was injured while on a special mission for defendant and defendant paid for his travel mileage when he travelled to perform his work. Based on the satisfaction of these two exceptions, the COA held that a sufficient nexus existed "'between the employment and the injury such that the injury was a circumstance of the employment' rather than a mere commute to work." Most importantly, the COA indicated that of the six factors found in Bowman, any single one can be sufficient on its own to create a nexus between a plaintiff's employment and the alleged injury.

Submitted by Jonathan Rea

LEO Reaches Out

Michigan's Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO) has been very effective in providing information to its constituents regarding the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding employment issues, as well as what rights employers and employees have at this time. While all of this information is important, there are some especially notable things to remember regarding unemployment assistance and the termination of employees:

Unemployment

A recent order from Governor Whitmer has significantly expanded the entitlement to unemployment benefits to include sick workers (who are quarantined or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave),

workers caring for loved ones (such as those who have an unanticipated family care responsibility, including childcare responsibilities due to school closures, or those who are forced to care for loved ones), and first responders (who work in the public health community and become ill or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19).

Additionally, the governor's order also extends to unemployment benefits from a total of 20 weeks to a total of 26 weeks, extends the eligibility application period from 14 days to 28 days, and suspended the requirement that applicants register in person and look for work.

As always, those unemployment benefits can be coordinated with any weekly worker's compensation benefit paid. The Federal government is also granting an extension as it relates to the payment of unemployment. In the past, the Michigan Compensation Appellate Commission held employers could coordinate those payments as well. We are of the opinion any current amount paid by the Federal unemployment extension to employees can be coordinated.

Terminating Workers

LEO issued guidance specifically indicating that "Due to the uncertainty regarding potential congressional action on how furloughed workers will be able to access federal resources, employers are strongly urged to place employees on temporary leave as opposed to termination." In order to assist with the practical concerns regarding this guidance, LEO recommended that employers specify the employee is on temporary/indefinite leave with return to work expected that is within 120 days, that employers do not create a contractual obligation to bring the employee back to work, that employers provide the employee with a formal Unemployment Compensation Notice, and that employers ensure employees are provided information on how to obtain unemployment insurance benefits.

Below is a reproduction of a press release from LEO that was sent out on March 23, 2020:

For Workers

Fling for Unemployment Benefits Eligible employees are strongly encouraged to apply for unemployment benefits online at Michigan.gov/UIA or by calling 866-500-0017. A [factsheet on how to apply for benefits](#) can also be found online.

Governor Whitmer's [Executive Order 2020-10](#) expands unemployment benefits to:

- *Sick Workers: Workers who are sick, quarantined, or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off.*
- *Workers Caring for Loved Ones: Workers who have an unanticipated family care responsibility, including those who have childcare responsibilities due to school closures, or those who are forced to care for loved ones who become ill and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off*
- *First responders: Individuals working in the public health community who become ill or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19 and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off.*

The [governor's order](#) also extends access to benefits for unemployed workers:

- *Increased Weeks: Benefits will be increased from 20 to 26 weeks.*
- *Longer Application Time: The application eligibility period will be increased from 14 to 28 days.*
- *Fewer Requirements: The in-person registration and work search requirements will be suspended.*

Visit the Unemployment Insurance Agency website for:

[Unemployment Resources for Employees](#)
[Employee Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Self-Employed Workers

The State is also seeking solutions for self-employed workers and independent contractors who traditionally do not have access to unemployment insurance. The governor has requested that President Trump issue a Major Disaster Declaration so that Individual Assistance and Disaster Unemployment Assistance through FEMA may be made available to additional Michiganders affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employers Work Share

Employers are encouraged to implement the State's Work Share program that permits employers who may be facing maintain business operations during declines in regular activity instead of laying off workers. The program allows employers to keep their employees working with reduced hours, while employees collect partial unemployment benefits to make up a portion of the lost wages. More information about Work Share is

available online at www.michigan.gov/WorkShare.

Visit the Unemployment Insurance Agency website for:

[Unemployment Resources for Employers](#)

[Employer Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Unpaid Leave vs. Termination

Due to the uncertainty regarding potential congressional action regarding whether furloughed workers will be able to access federal resources, employers are urged to place employees on temporary leave as opposed to termination. [View the State's guidance for employers contemplating potential layoffs.](#)

Capital Resources for Employers

Business Call Centers

The MEDC's call center stands ready to support businesses with questions about assistance available to small business through existing state programs by calling 888.522.0103. The Michigan Small Business Development Center can also provide resources at <https://sbdcmichigan.org/small-business-covid19/>.

Small Business Association Loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved the governor's request for a statewide Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) declaration, opening the opportunity to small businesses to access low-interest loans from the SBA.

Michigan small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, and nonprofits that have suffered substantial economic losses as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak can now apply for low-interest loans as part of \$1 billion in funding. The application for disaster loan assistance is available at: disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/.

Michigan Small Business Relief Program The Michigan Strategic Fund approved the [Michigan Small Business Relief Program](#) which authorizes the MEDC provide up to \$20 million in support for small businesses. The funding is divided between \$10 million in small business grants and \$10 million in small business loans to support businesses facing drastic reductions in cash flow and the continued support of their workforce. [The \\$10 million in grant funding](#) will be provided to local or nonprofit economic development organizations throughout the state to provide grants up to \$10,000 each to support certain small businesses that have realized a significant financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 virus. For more information visit, michiganbusiness.org/covid19

Tax Assistance for Small Businesses The Michigan Treasury Department is providing small businesses that have experienced disrupted operations due to the COVID-19 additional time to make their sales, use and withholding tax monthly payment. Small businesses scheduled to make these payments on March 20 can postpone filing and

payment requirements until April 20. Penalties and interest penalties will be waived for 30 days. [Learn more about penalties and interest online](#) or by calling the Treasury Business Tax Call Center at 517-636-6925.

Updates

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus).

The above resources and more can be found on the Michigan Coronavirus website, under [Employer and Employee resources](#).

The online webpage including this announcement can be found at:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MILEO/bulletins/283ba0e>

Submitted by Jonathan Rea and Michael Smith

Further Unemployment Expansion

Shortly after the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity issued the above information, they further expanded the eligibility of different types of workers to receive unemployment benefits. Governor Whitmer's most recent order on the issue indicated:

[Governor Whitmer today has announced new programs for workers affected by COVID-19.](#) The governor, under the federal CARES Act, signed an agreement between Michigan and the U.S. Dept. of Labor to implement Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Compensation programs that grant benefits to workers who do not already qualify for state unemployment benefits. Workers include self-employed, 1099-independent contractors, gig, and low-wage workers who can no longer work because of the pandemic. The agreement also increases weekly benefits for all unemployed workers by \$600 a week and extends benefit payments from 26 to 39 weeks. If someone has already applied for unemployment benefits, you DO NOT need to reapply at this time.

The online webpage including this announcement can be found at:

Submitted by Jonathan Rea

New Emergency Rules Regarding First Responders

On March 30, 2020, Governor Whitmer and the Worker's Disability Compensation Agency issued new Emergency Rules in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These new rules went into effect on March 30, 2020 and remain in effect for 6 months. These new Emergency Rules supersede the prior rules filed on March 18, 2020. The New Emergency Rules read as follows:

Rule 1. Injuries to first response employees.

Unless proven otherwise, a first response employee suffers a personal injury that arises out of and in the course of employment if the first response employee is diagnosed with CO VID-19, whether by a physician or as a result of a test. Denial of a claim by a first response employee diagnosed with COVID-19 violates the worker's disability compensation act of 1969, 1969 PA 317, MCL 418.101 to 418.941, and is subject to the penalties provided by section 631 of the worker's disability compensation act of 1969, 1969 PA 317, MCL 418.631, unless the denial is based on specific facts demonstrating that the first response employee was not exposed to COVID-19 at work.

Rule 2. Definition.

(1) As used in these rules, "first response employee" means any of the following:

(a) A person working in ambulance operations and advanced mobile emergency care services, county medical care facilities, emergency services, emergency medical services, homes for the aged, hospices, hospitals, or nursing homes.

(b) A person working in a home health agency or visiting nurse association.

(c) Any person working as a physician, physician assistant, nurse, emergency medical

technician, paramedic, or respiratory therapist.

(d) Any police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, on-call members of a fire department, volunteer civil defense workers, on-call members of a life support agency, or members of an emergency rescue team, as those terms are used in the worker's disability compensation act of 1969, 1969 PA 317, MCL 418.101 to 418.94 l.

(e) A member of the state police or an officer of the motor carrier enforcement division of the department of the state police.

(f) A state correctional officer or local corrections officer.

Rule 3. Application of other rules.

These emergency rules supersede the entirety of the emergency rules filed March 18, 2020.

As to Rule 1 the first change was the elimination of the "quarantine at the direction of the employer due to confirmed or suspected Covid 19 exposure" language. Now a first response employee is considered to have a compensable personal injury if they are diagnosed with Covid 19 by a doctor or through the results of a test.

Rule 1 now contains the penalty language for denial of a claim where as before such language was set forth in Rule 2. The new Emergency Rules still provides for penalties under Section 631 of the Worker's Compensation Disability Act if there is a denial of a claim by a first response employee. However, if the denial is based on a showing of specific facts that the first response employee was not exposed to Covid 19 at work, no penalty should be applied. Given this is a fact specific defense, it will have to be examined on a case by case basis.

As to Rule 2, the new Emergency Rules define with more specificity who is to be considered a first response employee. The rule has also added state and local correction officers to the list.

The new Emergency Rules can be found at:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/Workers_Disability_Compensation_Agency

Submitted by Michael Smith

Medical Care in the Midst of Coronavirus

Early yesterday, March 31, the director of the Michigan Workers' Compensation Agency, Jack Nolish, issued a message about how carriers should be handling certain situations involving medical care needed by workers' compensation plaintiffs. Below is the text of director Nolish's message:

The coronavirus pandemic demands that health care providers and payers reconsider how care is delivered to reduce the risk of further spreading infection. It is vitally important for injured workers in Michigan to be able to receive health care services without visiting their provider in person. The urgent need to contain the spread of this new virus means we must act quickly to increase the availability and use of telemedicine services.

- *The Workers' Disability Compensation Agency (the Agency) expects carriers to provide increased access to health care services through telemedicine delivery platforms and to encourage patients to use telemedicine delivery options to limit the amount of in-person health care services they seek.*
 - *Carriers are encouraged to work with providers to consider all options to provide an injured worker with appropriate and reasonable care, including telerehab options.*
 - *When appropriate, the carrier is encouraged to modify its payment and coverage policies regarding telemedicine furnished by physical, occupational, and speech therapists in accord with their professional scope of practice, to ensure that*
-

patients continue to have access to the rehabilitative care they need amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

- If a carrier and provider determine telerehab is in the best interest of the injured worker, the Agency encourages reimbursement rates for telerehab services that mirror payment rates for an equivalent service provided in person or that providers and carriers quickly agree on reasonable reimbursement rates.*
- The Agency notes that while the Health Care Services Rules prescribe a 3% late fee if a carrier does not reimburse the provider within 30 days of receipt of a properly submitted bill, it is advised that this penalty be waived during government imposed COVID-19 restrictions.*

Since the restrictions on individual activity specified in Governor Whitmer's executive order (EO 2020-20) may impact on an injured worker's ability to attend scheduled medical appointments, including physical therapy or psychological services, during the effective period of the orders, and any future extensions, related additional orders or expansion:

- failure to attend such appointments should not adversely impact the injured workers entitlement to benefits.*
- Simply stated, a claim should not be disputed for non-compliance with medical treatment.*
- Other options to secure the appropriate level of reasonable treatment should be explored, including telemedicine.*

On March 24, 2020, Agency Director Nolish sent a memo highlighting several points in Governor Whitmer's Executive Orders, including the directive that Demands or threats made to injured workers relative to attending evaluations or conducting job searches may be considered a violation of the Executive Orders. The Agency's position is that this also encompasses medical and psychological services as outlined above.

You can access a copy of the current health care services rules by clicking the following link: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/wca/HCS_Rules_643327_7.pdf

The rules provide billing and reimbursement directives for certain telemedicine procedure codes, including office visits, hospital visits, and psychotherapy visits with no restrictions on the originating site, which can be a private home:

- R418.10901 (4) A health care professional billing for telemedicine services shall only utilize procedure codes listed in Appendix P of the CPT codebook, as adopted by reference in R 418.10107, to describe services provided, excluding CPT codes 99241-99245 and 99251-99255. The provider shall append modifier -95 to the procedure code to indicate synchronous telemedicine services rendered via a real-time interactive audio and video telecommunications system with place of service code -02. All other applicable modifiers shall be appended in addition to modifier -95.

R418.101004 (14) When modifier -95 is used with a procedure code listed in Appendix P of the CPT codebook, as adopted by reference in R 418.10107, excluding CPT codes 99241-99245 and 99251-99255, the telemedicine services shall be reimbursed according to all of the following: (a) The carrier shall reimburse the procedure code at the non-facility maximum allowable payment, or the billed charge, whichever is less. (b) Supplies and costs for the telemedicine data collection, storage, or transmission shall not be unbundled and reimbursed separately. (c) Originating site facility fees shall not be separately reimbursed.

Submitted by Jonathan Rea

Please send us your comments or questions, and if there is a topic you would like to see discussed in the next Quarterly, let us know. We can be reached at (810) 767-9400 and email about the Quarterly should be sent to Jonathan Rea at

jrea@hanbalazar.com.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Members of the HSAWCF
FROM: Mary Penz, HSAWCF Administrator
DATE: April 2, 2020
SUBJECT: **NEWS AND UPDATES FROM HSAWCF**

In order to address the rapid changing situation regarding COVID-19, the HSAWCF is reaching out to inform our members regarding changes and updates related workers compensation and other related matters.

COVID – 19

Typically, claims from a communicable disease are not compensable, like the flu or the chicken pox, the Corona virus is a communicable disease that can be contracted anywhere. It would not be considered to be a work-related illness, however. Emergency Rules as issued by Governor Whitmer and the Workers Disability Compensation Agency have allowed for certain exceptions be made in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 30, 2020, the Governor issued new Emergency Rules to address injuries to first responder employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also defining what employees are classified as first responders. In addition, the Michigan Workers Disability Compensation Agency issued a memorandum on March 31, 2020 regarding medical treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A brief outline of the Governor's order to address first responders is as follows:

Rule 1: First Responders - Injuries to first response employees.

Unless proven otherwise, a first response employee suffers a personal injury that arises out of and in the course of employment if the first response employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, whether by a physician or as a result of a test.

Rule 2: Defining a first responder per the order is as follows:

- 1) As used in these rules, "first response employee" means any of the following:
 - a) A person working in ambulance operations and advanced mobile emergency care services, county medical care facilities, emergency services, emergency medical services, homes for the aged, hospices, hospitals, or nursing homes.
 - b) A person working in a home health agency or visiting nurse association.
 - c) Any person working as a physician, physician assistant, nurse, emergency medical technician, paramedic, or respiratory therapist.
 - d) Any police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, on-call members of a fire department, volunteer civil defense workers, on-call members of a life support agency, or members of an emergency rescue team, as those terms are used in the worker's disability compensation act of 1969, I 969 PA317, MCL 418. I 01 to 418.94 I.
 - e) A member of the state police or an officer of the motor carrier enforcement division of the department of the state police.
 - f) A state correctional officer or local corrections officer.

I am attaching a newsletter as prepared by Hanba Lazar that outlines this order as well as other employer information that you may find useful. On pages 8 and 9 you will find the information related to the Emergency Rules related to workers compensation including the list of those considered first responders. Realizing that our members have a variety of job descriptions, classifications and responsibilities, your agency may have employees that fit into this category. If you have a potential claim situation that arises you may reach out to Debra Burnet at CRS for guidance on filing the claim. We are encouraging members to do this in an effort to help ensure they are relaying the most accurate message possible.
dburnett@crsmi.com

HSAWCF and CRS will be reviewing each claim on a case by case situation. If a claim is filed, CRS will need to gather information about the employee's job description and tasks that they have been performing.

In addition to the Emergency Rules stated above the Workers Disability Compensation Bureau issued a memorandum on how insurance carriers should be handling certain medical conditions needed by workers compensation claimants. This consideration to deliver medical services via telemedicine is made in order to reduce the risk of further spreading the COVID-19 infection.

TELECOMMUTING – WORKING FROM HOME

With the Governor's Shelter in Place order many of your employees may now be working from home. It is important your organization develops a telecommuting policy to address this situation. Please review the attached a newsletter as provided by our TPA Comprehensive Risk Services -CRS. This newsletter addresses topics that may be included in your organizations telecommuting policy. Please keep in mind that it is best to have employees designate a specific work location in the home, this seems to work best at mitigating claims.

If you have any questions regarding this you may contact ksmylie@crsmi.com

PAYROLL AUDITS

Just a reminder that The Aprise Group will contact you to assist them in completing the 2019 HSAWCF payroll audits via electronic communication as well as by phone. This correspondence and request for information will come directly from The Aprise Group. Any questions for the payroll audits should be directed to aprisegroup@aprisegroup.com

Once the payroll audits are completed a copy of the audit and billing statement will be emailed to you. We ask that you review and let us know as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at marypenz@hsawcf.com

We hope that you find this information helpful.

These are unprecedented times and if we all work together we will get through this. The HSAWCF's organizations and their employees are most important to us. If you have any particular question or concerns for your agency please let me know. I can be reached at marypenz@hsawcf.com

Please stay safe and healthy!

TELEMEDICINE PROGRAMS

As we continue to provide services during these difficult times, many of you have reached out regarding some alternative telemedicine options. We want to take this opportunity to outline some of the available alternatives as they relate to occupational injuries as well as your own personal healthcare.

1. Concentra Telemed® for Coronavirus & Occupational Injuries

Concentra Telemed is available for COVID-19 workers' compensation visits in 38 states, 24/7/365. This includes screening evaluations for employees with potential work-related exposure to COVID-19. Please visit the [Concentra Telemed](#) web page for information on how to use telemedicine and a listing of states where telemedicine is available. Michigan is on the list!

- Concentra will only provide service to employees who have an Authorization to Treat
- Employers/payors will be billed as for any other workers' compensation telemedicine visit – these visits can be paid via the WC file
- Employees may experience longer than usual wait times based on volume

Rechecks: Concentra is currently developing a telemedicine option for workers' compensation rechecks, as an option for employees who prefer this option to visiting a Concentra medical center.

Return-to-work evaluations: Concentra is currently developing a telemedicine option for return-to-work evaluations for asymptomatic employees with possible exposure to COVID-19.

Contact person for updates: Rick Stonerook (Sr. Director) Phone: 303-435-0542 Email: rick_stonerook@concentra.com

Below are two links to more resources, one for our Corona virus page and the other for Telemed.
<https://www.concentra.com/coronavirus-2019-covid-19/>

<https://www.concentra.com/occupational-health/telemedicine/>

2. Spectrum – MedNow Program

Spectrum can provide occupational telemedicine triage services at a cost of \$45. The cost can be charged to the WC file. They also provide a telemedicine option for personal conditions as well. We have attached the MedNow poster and Intake Form, for your review. Also attached is information about the Behavioral Health Virtual Visits.

With respect to the Coronavirus, Spectrum Health has many efforts underway to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19:

- COVID-19 hotline (616.391.2380) continues to offer free virtual screenings and has proven to be a valuable resource. They have conducted over 300 screenings to date, which has helped to reduce the number of people who otherwise would have sought out care in person, increasing the potential risk of exposure to themselves and others.
- They have waived Priority Health member co-pays for medically necessary COVID-19 tests.
- They are working diligently to launch new solutions to help with COVID-19 specimen collection and testing. They will announce further details as they become available.
- Spectrum is in the process of providing virtual options, postponing or canceling all Spectrum Health public events that do not have an immediate health benefit through April 30. Stay informed with updates at spectrumhealth.org.
- Effective immediately, there are new visitor restrictions at all of their hospitals.
- Please share our COVID-19 resources (updated daily) with your families, friends and networks. These materials include fliers/posters (in English and Spanish), travel tips, videos and other resources.

Contact person for updates: Terri Carlson (Sales Executive) Phone: 616-994-2622 Email: terri.carlson@spectrumhealth.org

Training video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOWGf9Ws4MA>

3. Blue Cross/Blue Shield

With respect to your personal medical care, BCBS has committed to the following:

Your coverage

- *Telehealth visits* – Now through April 30th, Blue Cross is waiving member costs for medical visits through [Blue Cross Online Visits](#) or telemedicine medical visits conducted and billed through an in-network provider. This is to ensure you have convenient access to care from anywhere, including home.
- *Testing* – The cost of diagnostic lab testing for COVID-19 will be waived by Blue Cross when medically necessary and prescribed by a physician following CDC guidelines. Please note, this only includes the cost of the test. If it is done in conjunction with a medical visit, normal plan benefits would apply for the visit.
- *Treatment* – If you need treatment for an illness, your normal plan benefits would apply. You can check your benefits online by logging in to your member account.
- *Prescriptions* – To make sure that you don't run short on medications, Blue Cross is offering no early refill limits on 30-day maintenance medications*. Even better – you can get a 90-day mail-order prescription and skip the line at the pharmacy.

If you are interested in the 90-day mail order option, call the number on the back of your ID card. You can also log in to your member account at bcbsm.com and go to 'my coverage' then 'prescriptions' for online options.

Getting care

- **Primary care doctor:** The first stop for health care needs. A primary care doctor can help you navigate the system.
 - Log in at bcbsm.com to find a network provider
- **24-hour Nurse Line:** You can contact a registered nurse *free* for health care advice or information about health concerns.
 - PPO – 800-775-BLUE
 - HMO – 855-624-5214
- **Blue Cross Online Visits / Telemedicine:** You can have a face-to-face virtual visit with a board-certified doctor 24/7 anywhere in the U.S. The doctor can also prescribe medication.
 - Visit bcbsmonlinevisits.com Now through 4/30, *medical* visits are provided at no cost to members.
- **Mental Health Services:** If you are feeling anxious and need mental health or other personal support, help is just a phone call or click away.
 - New Directions Mental Health Services
 - PPO – 800-762-2382
 - HMO - 1-800-482-5982

- Blue Cross Online Visits Therapy
Visit bcbsmonlinevisits.com



Hello. We Hope this Newsletter finds you doing well.

Working at Home.....

With Executive Order 2020-21 issued by the Governor that took effect on March 24th, many of us find ourselves in a new work environment, our homes.

This is the place we feel most safe, the most comfortable and the most secure. And while this is true, we cannot ignore safety exposures that come from working at home.

For most, working at home means being on a computer, laptop, cell phone, telephone, iPad, Kindle or any other electronic device connecting us to the outside world. This work involves sitting in chairs, at desks or tables, or for some on a recliner, couch, or even working in bed. All of which can place strains on muscles, tendons, ligaments and body joints. Some more than others.

This newsletter will focus on helping us keep safe, lessen stress, and stay productive while we work at home.

The first thing we need to do is maintain regular hours. While working at home gives us some flexibility, the last thing we should be doing is working crazy hours that find us working at 2am instead of sleeping. Getting out of our normal work routine is the first step to losing the work-life balance when working from home. So, maintaining regular work hours as best as possible starts with keeping our morning routine. Getting up at the same time as usual keeps that morning routine.

For some of us, that's taking a shower, having a cup of coffee, eating breakfast, stretching and exercise, or reading the newspaper. Keep this routine.

One perk everyone who starts working from home instantly thinks about is being able to work in our pajamas. For most, this is a bad strategy. We think how nice to sleep in, get up and jump right into work. This is not a good plan.

Be comfortable but change clothes. It can be baggy pants and a cozy shirt, but change clothes. A normal routine that includes getting out of our sleepwear can be more powerful than our clocks, cellphones, and computers when it comes to getting started and being productive each workday.

Next, set rules for working at home with others who are home too. This would be creating your own workspace, not being interrupted, not doing house chores, and minimizing distractions.

The first rule to minimizing distractions is ***KEEP THE TELEVISION OFF***, or be in a different part of the house from where the TV is. Not only so you cannot see it, but also so you cannot hear it. It only takes the echo of, "C'mon on down, you're the next contestant on the Price Is Right," before you find yourself in the daily routine of watching a game show for an hour and thinking to yourself, "Dang it, I could win a car every time if I could get on that show." In all seriousness, it's so important to separate yourself as far away as possible from the TV. This will minimize negative effects on production. Make sure your family fully understands you need your space.

Next, make sure you stay in contact with your coworkers. Even if what you are working on is individual work or assignments, take the time to reach out to your colleagues. Starting the day with a "Good Morning" email or a quick phone call keeps us in touch with the real world out there. For some, the first emotions we'll feel at home are that of loneliness, isolation, and disconnect from our coworkers, who in many cases are our friends. We'll soon notice we miss their faces, the stories, the socializing, and the feeling of being amongst them. Messaging apps, emails, texts are great ways to take a brief moment to socialize. But please make sure to avoid the pitfalls of reaching out to someone who may be a long-winded emailer or texter. Have a plan in place to make sure the socializing is just an opportunity to take a break to communicate. Start your text or email with, "Hello, just thought I'd take a quick moment to say hi and see how things are going on your end." A few back and forth replies usually is enough to have an impact and make us feel in touch.

Another thing we want to keep in mind when creating our workspace is to find an area of our home with natural light. Windows that let in sunshine have wonderful effects on our attitude, happiness and lessens stress. With that said, please make sure sunlight does not cause any issues with glare on our computers and monitors, and does not shine directly into our eyes.

Ok, now we need to address the exposures on our bodies. This is the ergonomics side of the equation. This is the part where we establish control measures that minimize strains and stresses on the body, muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

It all starts with the chair and sitting. And yes, we mean a chair. A piece of furniture that has you sitting upright. Not a recliner, couch

or bed, or on the floor putting your neck, back, and shoulders in awkward positions.

These are postures we don't want to be working in:



Stress and over-exertion on shoulders and knees

If possible, use a laptop computer docking station with external keyboard and monitor.

It all starts with a chair!

Make sure your chair allows you sit up straight. Ideally it should have a back that provides lumbar support. If your chair is a straight back with a big seat base that has a gap between your back and the chair back, use a pillow or cushion to provide support.

Next, make sure the table or desk is at a good working height. If this is your workspace at home, it's not going to go well:



Ouch!

Ideally, we want to be sitting straight up, feet on the floor with head, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, and back all in neutral positions.

This is the posture we are shooting for:



Yes!

If you are using a telephone or cellphone, if possible, use the speaker. If you cannot, do not hold the phone in place with your head and shoulder. This can cause strain and over-exertion on the neck, upper back and shoulders:



Don't be this guy!

Computer Workstation Ergonomics Checklist

Use a checklist as a guide to determine the best and most comfortable setup for you.

The *COMPUTER WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST* published by the National Institute of Health is an excellent resource:

<https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/Documents/Computer%20Workstation%20Ergonomics%20Self%20Assessment%20Checklist.pdf>

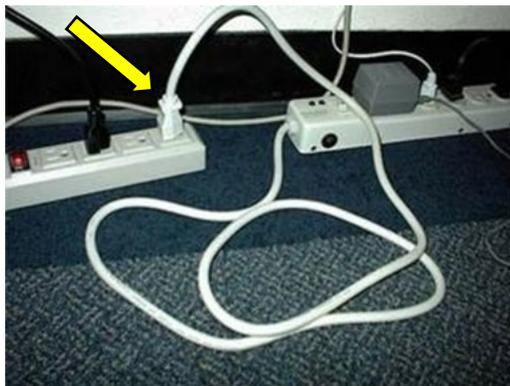
Also make sure the area you select to setup your workstation has enough room and space for you to spread out your work and not be confined or cramped. Your workspace should have enough surface area to comfortably contain your computer setup, cellphone or telephone, documents, and your printer (if you are using one).

If you will take part in online face-to-face meetings, such as Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, make sure you have an appropriate background décor. This is also another reason to start your day with a shower and get out of your pajamas.

Other safety tips and suggestions for working at home include:

- As at the office, take mini breaks to stretch muscles and relieve eyestrain. On your regular breaks go for a short walk around the house, or even better outside. Just being outside for 5 minutes allows us to intake fresh air and refocus.
- Keep floors clear and free of hazards, especially trip hazards such as cords and cables.
- Keep office space neat and clear of combustibles.
- Make sure you have adequate electrical power available and electrical cords, plugs, and outlets are in good condition.
- Do not over-load outlets and do not daisy chain power strips. Meaning do not plug one power strip into another.

These Are No No's



Organization, Management & Piece of Mind

As much as possible, try to maintain the same schedule you did while working in your office. It will take time and effort to get accustomed to your new work environment, so be patient and relax. As with anything, it will take time to get used to change.

Prioritize your tasks and assignments at the beginning of each workday and set goals and objectives for what you wish to accomplish and complete.

Remember, we are social beings and need communication. Stay in contact with your supervisors and work teams. As managers, we should set forth expectations with our employees with regards to work hours, availability, regular duties, and productivity. Have a plan for regular staff/team meetings. Video chats will have a better impact than an ordinary conference call.

One of the biggest challenges most of us will face, is that we will not be the only one at home. This is especially true if we have children. Even more so if they are young and need care and supervision. Develop plans that work around nap times if you need silence to make phone calls. If your day care or pre-school gives rewards such as fruits or snacks for good behavior, continue this routine. Children will definitely understand what's going on here.

On lunch breaks take children outside and let them run around and get fresh air. This is always a good recipe for an afternoon nap.

There is no doubt working from home with kids will be a tough chore. Offer fellow workers, friends and other parents words of encouragement.

America is tough, we are strong, our workers are resilient, and we will concur!

Cyber Security

When it comes to cyber security, be aware and alert for phishing and malware attacks. These types of scams are escalating with the Coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak. Follow your company's cyber policies and report any suspicious activity, information or emails to your IT personnel immediately. Also, keep in mind your home internet and cyber system can be much more vulnerable to an attack than at your office. Therefore, it is important to ensure your home WiFi system and internet connections are adequately secured with strong password and firewalls, and only authorized users have access. Unless specifically authorized by your company, do not use personal computers or other devices as a back door into your company's system.



REMEMBER.....



No!



No!

Keep regular hours and to prevent fatigue and musculoskeletal discomfort, do not use a couch, lounge chair, coffee table, snack table, bed or floor for work activities. These surfaces are not conducive to creating a stable and productive work environment.

P.O. Box 505, Novi, MI 48376 Phone 248-344-8550, Fax 248-344-8560
www.crsmi.com

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