Infectious Disease Planning In a Post Pandemic World

Life in the USA changed in 2020 as states halted operations to slow down the spread of the infectious disease known as the Coronavirus or COVID-19. This pandemic demonstrated that infectious diseases are not limited to cluster outbreaks or isolated incidents, and that it could happen at any time. And as a result, businesses have had to reconsider how they perform their work as they move forward, and their planning for future crises will likely be critical to their continued operations.

Infectious diseases have long been a focus of hospitals and healthcare settings. But it's now clear that all construction operations, service technicians, retail stores, restaurants, public transportation, and many others need to plan for this exposure. Infectious Disease Control needs to be part of a company's safety policy with protocols to reduce the risk of exposure to workers and the public.

Steps to Get Ready for a Post Pandemic World

1. Develop an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan

   - A written plan that can be adapted for future specific infectious diseases to address specific exposures, routes of transmission, etc.

   - It should consider continuity planning to help mitigate work disruptions

     o Alternative methods to deliver your products or services

     o Cross training of employees

     o Supply chain reliability and alternatives

     o Types and adequacy of PPE and other essential equipment

2. Implement basic Infection Prevention measures such as:

   - Hand washing – Will it require warm water, special soaps, scrubbing tools, etc.?

   - Sanitation and cleaning procedures – Outside services vs in-house procedures

   - Physical distancing – What might the new response require?

   - Telecommuting – Working from home

Steps to Get Ready for a Post Pandemic World (Cont'd)

3. Implement Workplace Controls

- Engineering Controls such as:
    - Separation of workstations to maintain distancing
    - Use of protective shields or barriers to separate workers/public
    - Modifications to air quality and ventilation systems

- Administrative Controls such as:
    - Education and training on disease transmission and controls
    - Scheduling such as staggered work shifts

- Personal Protective Equipment such as:
    - Face masks
    - Gloves

It is important to stay up to date with current OSHA and CDC safety tips and requirements, as well as federal, state, and local rules and regulations. Below is a list of a few of the many resources available through the CDC and OSHA.

The CDC's Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf

The CDC's National Pandemic Strategy Resource Page
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/national-strategy/index.html

OSHA's Pandemic Influenza Overview Page
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/pandemicinfluenza/

OSHA's COVID-19 Resource Page
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html

For more information regarding infectious disease response planning and controls, or to register for Acadia's safety training and resource portal, the Risk Management Center (RMC), please contact Acadia's Virtual Loss Control Team at 207-874-5701 or virtuallc@acadia-ins.com.

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