

## Coronavirus and Occupational Health & Safety

In terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act), companies must, where reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment that is without risk to employees. Further to this, businesses must identify hazards at the workplace, and the associated risks, and do what is reasonably practicable to mitigate the risks. Coronavirus is a hazard and organisations need to be able to identify when this hazard may be present at the workplace, and the level of risk it might pose to other employees. Whilst this is currently not a concern in South Africa, it is important that the situation is continually monitored through knowledge resources such as the National Institute for Communicable Diseases ([www.nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za)) and that risk assessments are amended and updated to cater for any changes to the current status.



Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). The WHO is, with a broad range of global experts, governments and partners, expanding scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and to provide advice to countries and individuals on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of the outbreak.

### How Does Coronavirus Spread?



Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, close personal contact (such as caring for or living with an infected person), or touching an object or surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth or eyes before washing your hands.

### Coronavirus Infection Prevention


- People should follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses of any kind:
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash your hands especially after coughing and sneezing, before and after caring for an ill person, and before preparing food and before eating.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils) with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except when you need to get medical care.
- Wash hands after animal contact and after visiting farms, markets, barns, petting zoos, and agricultural fairs.
- Avoid contact with animals who are sick.



### What are the symptoms of coronavirus infections?

Coronaviruses typically cause respiratory symptoms, such as: runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, and fever.

DETERMINED BY DOCTORS

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