Hygiene in the Workplace

Good hygiene in the workplace is essential for maintaining a healthy environment for all employees and limiting the spread of illness. There are several things employers can do to ensure that workers are practicing proper hygiene while also ensuring that facilities are sanitary.

WORKER HYGIENE

Hand Washing

Proper hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases. Hand washing is an activity that should always be done before beginning work and should be repeated frequently throughout the day. It is especially critical after performing any of the following activities:

- Before and after using the restroom
- Eating foods or drinking beverages
- Returning to work after a break
- Coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose
- Touching dirty surfaces, equipment or utensils
- Handling dirty materials, trash, garbage, or waste
- Performing maintenance on any equipment
- Before and after treating a wound (yourself or others)
Recognizing Illness

It is important to properly self-evaluate when you are showing signs of illness. Symptoms of respiratory illness include:

- Cough,
- Sneezing,
- Nasal discharge,
- Nasal congestion,
- Runny nose,
- Fever,
- Scratchy or sore throat, and
- Nasal breathing

Workers who are ill should stay home and, if a worker shows signs of illness during the workday, they should report their illness to supervisors and go home.

Coughing & Sneezing

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you don’t have a tissue, cough into your elbow. Be sure to practice proper etiquette when coughing or sneezing, turn away from others and cover your face. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing into them. Social distancing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the transmission of disease.
WORKPLACE SANITATION

• Restroom facilities should be well-maintained and regularly cleaned. Restrooms should be well-stocked with disinfecting soap and/or hand sanitizers that have an alcohol concentration of at least 60%. Restroom facilities should be sanitized with disinfectant on a regular schedule.

• Frequently clean all commonly touched work surfaces, work areas, and equipment (e.g., telephones, doorknobs, lunch areas, countertops, copiers, etc.). Use disinfecting cleaning agents and follow the directions on the label.

• Ensure there is potable water available for employees on worksites and discourage workers from sharing drinks, water, and water containers with other employees.

ACTION ITEMS:

• Encourage sick workers to stay home. The CDC recommends that workers who have a fever and respiratory symptoms stay at home until 24 hours after their fever ends (100 degrees Fahrenheit [37.8 degrees Celsius] or lower), without the use of medication. Other symptoms could include a runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

• Develop a policy for workers and clients who become ill in the workplace.

• Develop a policy on how to deal with workers who may be ill with the flu or other illnesses and communicate it to your workers.

• Determine who will be responsible for assisting ill individuals in the workplace and make sure that at least one person can serve as the “go to” person if someone becomes sick in the workplace.

• Consider how to separate ill workers from others, or give them a surgical mask to wear, if possible.
Resources and References:

Connecticut Coronavirus Resources:
https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus

OSHA Employer Guidance on the Seasonal Flu
https://www.osha.gov/dts/guidance/flu/nonhealthcare.html


CDC Water, Sanitation, and Environmentally-Related Hygiene Training and Education
https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/training-education.html

Special thanks to the Cornell Local Roads Program for sharing resources for this Tailgate Talk.

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# Tailgate Safety Talk Sign In Sheet

**Topic:** *Hygiene in the Workplace*

**Agency:**  

**Crew:**  

**Supervisor/Talk Leader:**  

**Date:**  

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