

## Monitoring the Status of the Coronavirus

Mar 13, 2020



FirstEnergy's Corporate Health and Safety group continues to be vigilant in monitoring the spread of illness due to the new coronavirus (COVID-19), through information provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the World Health Organization (WHO). China has experienced widespread illness, and the spread of the COVID-19 virus has occurred to neighboring eastern countries and some European countries. However according to the CDC, the general risk to the American public remains very low.

FirstEnergy has a business continuity plan to deal with potential threats to operations, such as influenza pandemics. We are prepared to implement the plan in the event that any company measures are necessary to respond to COVID-19. At this time, employees should be aware of and follow the recommended measures to minimize the spread of infectious diseases, like seasonal influenza, as explained below.

### Travel Information

To help ensure the health and safety of all our employees, guidelines are in place for overseas travel. Anyone who has traveled to or traveled through China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, Japan or Hong Kong in the past 14 days – or who has a member of their household who has recently visited these regions – should contact the Corporate Health and Safety group at [corporatehealthandsafety@firstenergycorp.com](mailto:corporatehealthandsafety@firstenergycorp.com).

Each individual will be evaluated for return to work on a case-by-case basis. A nurse case manager will contact the individual to review their travel and health status, in accordance with CDC risk guidelines. The corporate health services representative will make recommendations to the Human Resources manager and supervisor. Applicable labor agreements will continue to be followed, and supervisors can contact Labor Relations with matters regarding bargaining unit employees.

The coronavirus belongs to a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to influenza to serious respiratory conditions. The COVID-19 pattern of disease shows that 75-80% of patients will have few symptoms or a mild illness and recover fully. Those individuals at risk for serious illness complications include the elderly and/or people who have chronic underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung diseases or cancer. Medical care is required for about 15-20% of patients.

## Staying Well

The best way to prevent spread of infection from any respiratory borne virus, including the flu, is to avoid exposure. As a reminder, the CDC recommends the routine use of these preventive actions:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, before and after food preparation, before eating and after using the restroom or changing diapers. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing and coughing. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. Throw the tissue in the trash and then wash your hands.
- Be careful to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, as hands transmit germs.
- Clean and disinfect objects and work surfaces frequently with an anti-bacterial, anti-viral household cleaning product.
- During flu season, minimize time in crowded areas such as shopping centers or public events.
- Before or even during flu season, get your seasonal flu shot.
- Using facemasks or respirators to protect from respiratory diseases including COVID-19 is recommended only for healthcare workers or ill patients.

## Seeking Medical Attention

The appropriate time to seek medical attention for an infectious disease depends on the severity and type of symptoms as well as the age of the individual, especially the young or elderly. Seasonal influenza can be treated best by antiviral medication if initiated within 24 to 48 hours after symptoms appear. Some respiratory illnesses may clear up with treatments to address the symptoms and not require prescribed medications.

You may want to contact your primary care provider for advice on how best to treat these symptoms:

- Sudden onset of influenza symptoms – such as fever, headache, chills, fatigue, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, or diarrhea and vomiting – requires early evaluation and treatment
- Persistent symptoms (for 24 to 48 hours) including fever, cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, excessive drowsiness, confusion, or vomiting or diarrhea, or other unexplained symptoms requires medical evaluation

Employees missing work due to an illness are encouraged to be cleared by their primary care provider prior to returning to work.

The Corporate Health and Safety group will continue to monitor the COVID -19 situation and provide periodic updates to the employees. Questions or concerns can be directed to the Corporate Health and Safety group at [corporatehealthandsafety@firstenergycorp.com](mailto:corporatehealthandsafety@firstenergycorp.com).

Remember, we have the power to keep each other safe.

### **Additional information on coronavirus**

Employees interested in learning more about the coronavirus can visit the [CDC's website\\*](#).

*\*By clicking this link, you are entering a website maintained by an outside party, which is entirely responsible for the site's content.*