

***These are the protocols as of March 11, 2020. They will be updated as evolving guidance is received from government health organizations.***

***QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
ON THE AFL-CIO PROTOCOL FOR THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)***

The AFL-CIO has been continuously monitoring the new coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The safety and health of our employees, our entire AFL-CIO union community and our union families are our primary concern.

A designated AFL-CIO staff team is coordinating with government health organizations and professional experts to share timely and factual information with our community. The [AFL-CIO website](#) is updated with timely information about the outbreak and includes helpful precautions for employers and staff. The website will be updated regularly as this is an evolving situation.

***Does the AFL-CIO have a comprehensive written protocol to address COVID-19?***

The AFL-CIO has a written protocol to address COVID-19, as reflected in this document, and will continue developing this protocol over time.

***What specific safety measures are in place to prevent the risk of infection at work?***

In addition to the communications sent to AFL-CIO staff and building partners on March 2 and the guidance provided in this document, the AFL-CIO will continue to provide updated guidance to employees and building partners with information about COVID-19.

Any changes in the AFL-CIO protocol will be communicated to AFL-CIO employees and building partners by email. For any questions regarding workplace precautions or protocols related to COVID-19, or to address any concerns, please contact Human Resources (HR) Director Samantha Connolly ([sconnolly@aflcio.org](mailto:sconnolly@aflcio.org), 202-639-6203 or 240-271-3539).

The AFL-CIO has already placed on bathroom doors visual reminders from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on hand-washing etiquette and will continue to post information and posters provided by the CDC.

Effective March 2, the AFL-CIO Facility Management team began additional morning and evening cleanings for all communal areas in the AFL-CIO headquarters building.

To support implementation of CDC recommendations, the AFL-CIO is providing additional sanitizing products such as anti-bacterial gel and wipes in all communal places, including conference rooms, bathrooms, elevators, hallways and kitchens. Sanitizing products will be sent to AFL-CIO staff based in the field.

In addition, individual size anti-bacterial gel and wipes are available to all our employees and building partners for individual use and for the frequent cleaning of workstations and electronic devices. Coordinate with your hub or resource director to obtain supplies from Purchasing.

The AFL-CIO has a process in place to ensure there are sufficient supplies for sanitation and worker protection in the future, as well as sufficient staff for routine cleaning of the building.

The AFL-CIO will communicate this protocol to building partners.

***What precautions should employees and building partners follow?***

Employees and building partners should follow a number of commonsense precautions to reduce the risk of becoming ill or spreading the virus to others. These include the following:

- Know the symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms seem to begin two to 14 days after an exposure.
- Notify the HR director if you have these symptoms.
- Stay home when you are sick or if you have a sick family member in your home.
- Follow proper etiquette for coughs and sneezes by coughing into your arm, not your hand, and immediately and properly discarding any tissues in no-touch receptacles. Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water remain the best method for cleaning in part because of the mechanical action of rubbing your hands. It is especially important to clean your hands before eating food or touching your face.
- Use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. However, there are health concerns about chemical additives in hand sanitizers that may cause dry skin or skin irritation.
- Frequent hand-washing or use of hand sanitizer can cause your hands to become very dry or cracked, so use lotion to keep your hands moisturized.

- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes, especially if your hands have not been cleaned.
- Keep frequently touched surfaces and objects clean, especially in break rooms. If possible, avoid using co-workers' phones, computers, offices, work tools or equipment.
- Limit close contact (within 6 feet) with people who are ill.
- Avoid shaking hands.

***What should employees do if they develop COVID-19 symptoms?***

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease, and if employees develop symptoms such as fever, coughing and shortness of breath, they should call their health care provider for advice rather than stopping by the provider's office, where they may infect other patients and the providers themselves. As with seasonal flu, people at highest risk for severe disease and death include people aged 60 and older and those with underlying conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and cancer, according to the World Health Organization.

If an employee begins to feel ill or develops any symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, the employee should immediately leave work for the day and return home. The employee must notify the HR director and their supervisor by email or phone.

Employees with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 are required to share this information with their respective local health department and with the AFL-CIO HR director. The employee should take all direction from their health care provider and local health department. A release from a treating physician will be required before the employee can return to work.

***What should employees do if they have been in contact with a family member or other person who has contracted the virus?***

Employees who have had a known exposure to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 or someone who is quarantined must notify the AFL-CIO HR director and their supervisors and self-isolate for 14 days. They also should notify a local health department to obtain instructions for appropriate medical review of possible COVID-19 infection.

***What is the AFL-CIO's policy on domestic and international travel?***

The AFL-CIO is closely monitoring CDC recommendations for domestic and international

travel. We will continue to review all travel, domestic and international, on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration high-risk individuals, destination and work necessity.

Beginning March 11, AFL-CIO staff should contact the HR director to determine whether any previously scheduled travel is essential.

All international travel is being reviewed and most international travel has been suspended at this time. All international travel will require prior approval by the HR director.

Directors of hubs and resources should consult HR with questions about the criteria for approving travel.

Staff with individual concerns about travel in light of their health status should contact the HR director directly.

Please contact the HR director regarding scheduled personal travel to provide location and duration of your travel. If you are traveling to a Level 3 high-risk destination, you will be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon your return.

***If employees have to cancel their work travel plans, will they be reimbursed for expenses incurred?***

Yes. Expenses incurred as a result of required cancellation of work travel would be reimbursed to employees consistent with the AFL-CIO Travel and Expense Policy.

***What is the AFL-CIO policy on meetings in the building?***

The AFL-CIO will consider the question of meetings in the building on a case-by-case basis, but we generally are encouraging staff to limit the number of unnecessary visitors to the building for the time being. The AFL-CIO already has postponed or canceled many large group meetings.

Instead of organizing meetings in the building, we encourage employees to communicate via telephone, conference calls, email or video conferencing when practical.

We especially discourage staff from organizing meetings with visitors from other countries. We have already canceled one meeting with international visitors.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the HR director.

***What is the AFL-CIO's policy on sick leave and family and medical leave?***

The AFL-CIO is encouraging all staff to stay at home when they are not feeling well.

Paid sick leave provisions will apply to support employees in the utilization of paid leave benefits.

In the event an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, the AFL-CIO will extend the employee's sick days to cover the length of their symptoms (24 hours without a fever and without using fever-reducing medication) and the expiration of any medically required quarantine period. HR may request medical documentation.

In the event an employee has possible exposure or contact but not immediate illness, the employee must review their circumstances with HR and, if confirmed, will be required to work from a remote quarantined home location.

Please contact the HR director at 202-639-6203 with any questions about eligible leave.

The AFL-CIO policy for the recording and approval of leave will apply for all leave benefits including sick, vacation, compensatory, and family and medical leave.

***What is the AFL-CIO policy on remote work options in response to a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace?***

The AFL-CIO is developing additional protocols for remote work options in the event of government health agency recommendations or scenarios such as the quarantine of an employee, the advisability of reducing workplace density to support social distancing, or the closure of the building.

The AFL-CIO will survey staff to determine individual remote work capabilities.

***What is the AFL-CIO policy in the event of school closures?***

The AFL-CIO is monitoring this closely and developing guidance for situations where there are school closures affecting children of employees. Paid leave benefits will be utilized in this situation.

***What is the AFL-CIO protocol if an employee has tested positive for COVID-19?***

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the AFL-CIO will alert staff and provide direction on next steps. The AFL-CIO will contract with a specialized company for sanitizing the workplace. The appropriate quarantine will be required for staff, building partners and any other guests who may have been exposed. The local health department will be notified of the diagnosis and to verify compliance with all recommended workplace protocols.

***What is the AFL-CIO policy in the case of a medically required quarantine or a required shutdown of the building?***

The AFL-CIO is developing additional protocols for remote work options in the event of government health agency recommendations or scenarios such as the quarantine of an employee or employees, the advisability of reducing workplace density to support social distancing, or the closure of the building.

In the event the headquarters building is shut down, all staff with the capacity to do so will work from a remote home location. The AFL-CIO is continuing to refine a detailed protocol to address these situations. For staff positions that do not have the capacity to work remotely, additional leave and work options will be considered.

***How will payment of employees be handled in the case of shutdown or quarantine?***

Normal payment practices will apply. If necessary, payroll will be run remotely so that employees will continue to be paid. Employees who do not receive paychecks through direct deposit will receive a manual check via the U.S. Postal Service.

***Is there a process in place for determining possible exposure of AFL-CIO staff to the virus?***

Human Resources is monitoring staff leave and travel for potential exposure. The AFL-CIO also is requesting that all employees notify the HR director of personal travel destinations, travel method and duration. The AFL-CIO will follow appropriate

confidentiality requirements, and the names of employees who have contracted the virus will not be disclosed to other employees as part of contact tracking.

***Has the above information been communicated to the employee unions?***

Yes. The HR Department is in regular contact with staff unions about changes in practices and procedure. A labor management work group is being convened for regular communications on COVID-19.

***I want to discuss COVID-19 and questions or concerns I may have. Whom do I contact?***

Please contact AFL-CIO Human Resources Director Samantha Connolly via work (202-639-6203) or mobile (240-271-3539) or by email ([sconnolly@afcio.org](mailto:sconnolly@afcio.org)).

**[DC Government](#)**

**[Maryland Department of Health](#)**

**[Virginia Department of Health](#)**