



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Work Release**

#### **What you need to know**

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Panhandle Health District

*This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.*

Employees are vulnerable and scared during these times. Communicating, working with options for your staff, and being supportive will help both of you. Follow the CDC recommendations which can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>. These guidelines are important to help ease the burden on the healthcare system.

Panhandle Health recommends encouraging and allowing sick employees to stay home and self-isolate. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should stay home and not return to work until they do not have a fever for at least 72 hours without any fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms. Healthcare workers have additional guidelines to adhere to.

Be supportive of your staff who need to stay home to care for a sick child or other family member. Some may feel the need to stay home if living or caring for people that are ill, older, immunocompromised, pregnant and working in healthcare or public safety. Others may simply not have access to adequate or affordable childcare with schools being dismissed.

Employers should allow working remotely and flexible hours to increase the social distancing among staff. This will help minimize exposure between employees and the public. You should follow guidelines for limiting in person attendance to meetings or events.

Employees that come to work or become sick during their shift who appear to have acute respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fever) should be sent home immediately. Follow CDC cleaning guidelines to protect other staff who could potentially be exposed.

Employers should be performing routine cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the proper cleaning agents. Proper respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene should be encouraged.

Employers should review their policies and consider changing their policy to not require staff to have a doctor's note to return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time testing is limited due to supplies and people cannot be tested simply for a work release. You should follow guidelines for staff returning to work developed by the CDC. Staff should not be encouraged to visit a testing site since they may not meet criteria, nor visit the emergency room. Many providers in the community are not able to see patients and give work releases during this time.

Most people will only have mild illness and should follow the recommendations to stay home and self-isolate in order to help stop the spread and protect those who are most at risk for serious illness. Call our Coronavirus Hotline at 877-415-5225 and we can talk to you about your potential risk. If we feel you are at risk, we can connect you with our clinic staff for further assessment and orders for testing if it is clinically necessary.

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**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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