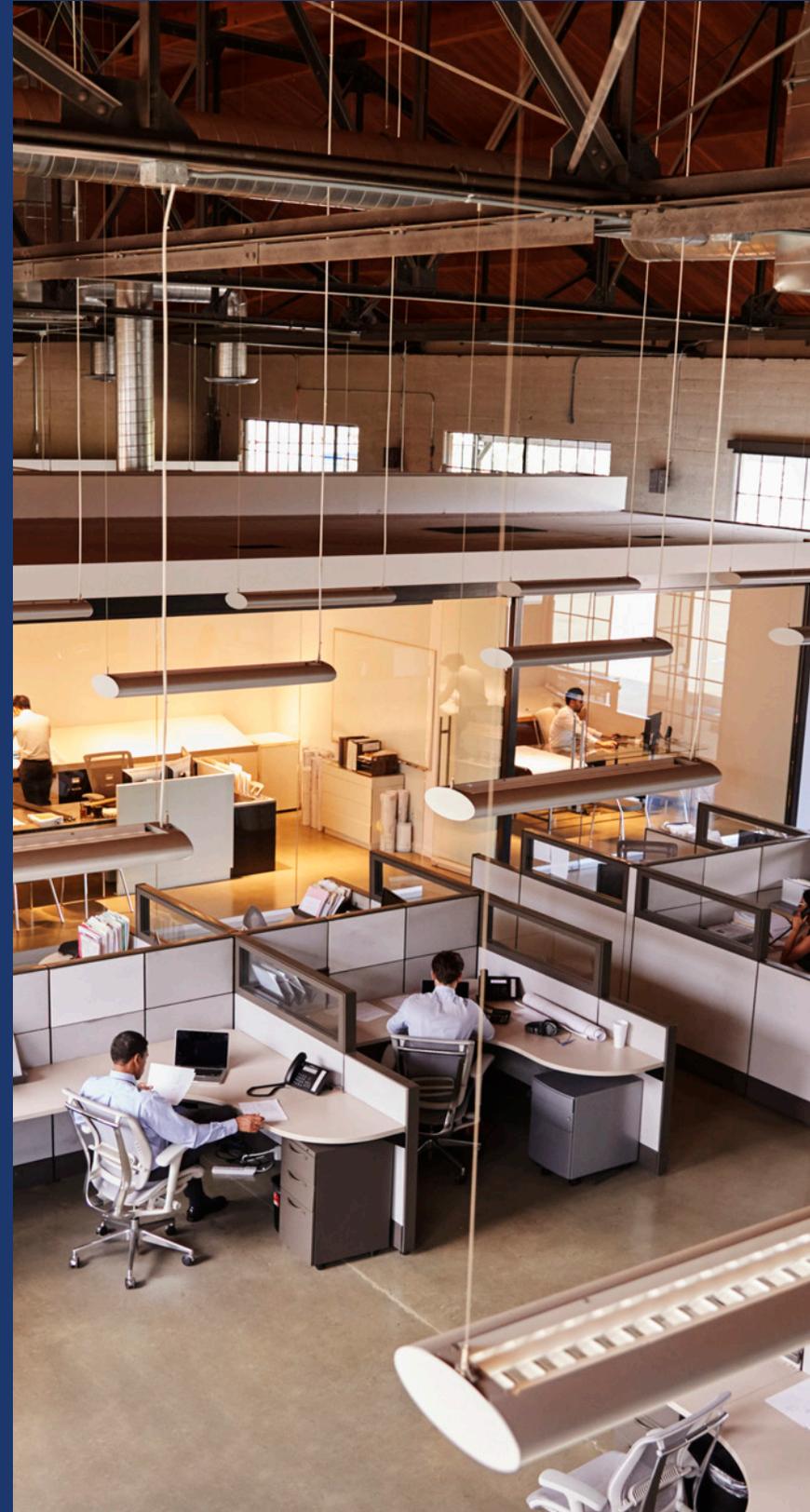




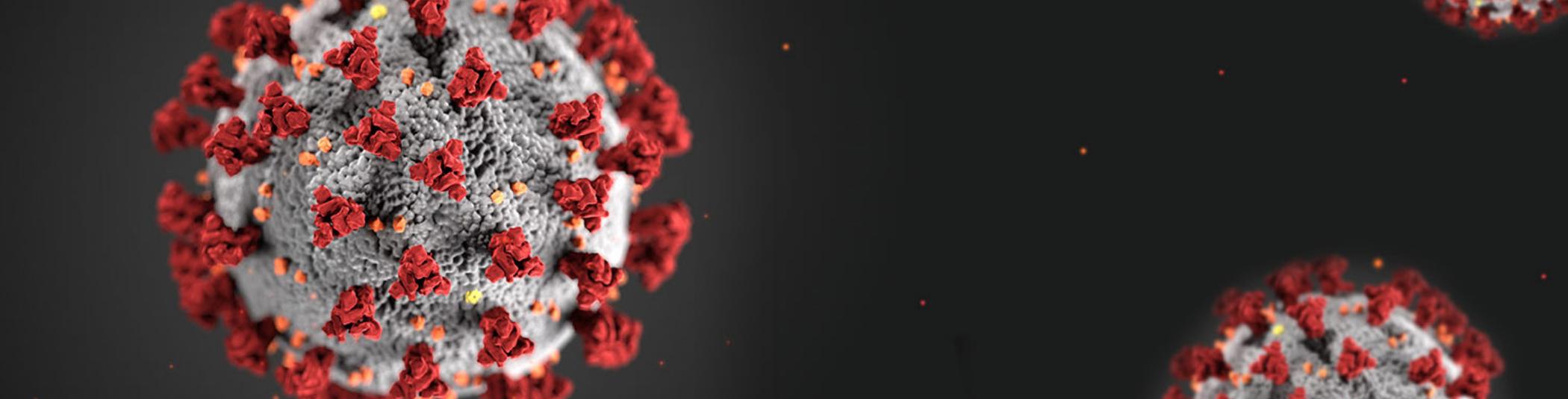
# Preventing **Infectious Diseases** in the Workplace





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# Preventing the Spread of Infectious Diseases in the Workplace Is Everyone's Responsibility.

Employees and employers should stay up-to-date and vigilant—not just during flu season but year-round. The risks and potential costs of infectious diseases affect every industry, including commercial, residential, multifamily, government, hospitality, retail and education.

An infectious disease—also known as a contagious or communicable disease—can spread from one person to another and is caused by pathogenic microorganisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi). Droplet-borne transmission occurs when a person coughs, sneezes or talks. Diseases can also spread through the air, by direct or indirect contact with an infected person or contaminated objects and through consumption of contaminated food and water.

An employee can be exposed to an infectious disease at any time. Preventing its spread requires basic infection control procedures, such as washing hands often, avoiding close contact and maintaining a clean work environment.

It is important for businesses to develop written policies and procedures for infection control and to encourage employees to practice proper hygiene. **If there is a chance that your workplace is contaminated, call a professional immediately.**

## KEY POINT #1

# Elements of an Effective Policy

Businesses of all sizes should appoint an individual or team dedicated to infectious disease management. The coordinator should be familiar with as many general aspects of the business as possible. The team should include employee and management representatives from human resources, operations, legal, information technology and facility maintenance.

Employers should have infection control procedures written specifically for their workplace. An effective policy should address the following:

- workplace safety precautions
- employee travel restrictions
- medical checkups
- vaccinations or medical recommendations
- reportings of exposure (i.e., employees reporting to employers and employers reporting to public health authorities)
- employee quarantine or isolation
- facility shutdowns

Employees should be routinely reminded of company standards and expectations of health during the workweek. Employers should stress the importance of sick employees staying at home to prevent the spread of infection and, if possible and necessary, outline procedures on telecommuting for those employees.



## PRO TIP

Evaluate and update plans at least once a year to reflect new or modified tasks and procedures.

Resources to use:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)
- [United States Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

## KEY POINT #2

# Key Prevention Strategies

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following actions for disease prevention in the workplace:

- Promote everyday preventative actions (staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often and cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects)
- Provide flu-prevention supplies
- Anticipate absences of employees who are sick or who must care for others
- Develop a method to track disease-related employee absences
- Identify a space that can be used to separate sick people who cannot get home immediately
- Plan ways to continue essential services if onsite operations are reduced temporarily



### KEY POINT #3

## Keeping the Workplace Clean

Serious respiratory illnesses are generally spread through coughing or sneezing, touching objects with contaminated hands, and touching your face after touching contaminated objects, according to the CDC.

Here are three basic steps to help prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses:

### 1. Wash Your Hands

Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hands should be washed after using the bathroom; before, during and after food preparation; before eating food; after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; after caring for someone who is sick or after changing a child's diaper; after handling pets or other animals or their food and waste; and after touching garbage.

If soap and water are unavailable, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Employers should provide soap and water and hand sanitizers in the workplace and ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Employers should promote frequent hand-washing and consider providing tissues and touch-free trash bins.



## KEY POINT #3 (CONTINUED)

### 2. Sneezing and Coughing Etiquette

To help prevent the spread of germs, avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when you cough or sneeze and put used tissue in a wastebasket.

### 3. Clean Workstations

Employers should encourage employees and housekeeping staff to routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces—keyboards, remote controls, desks, countertops and doorknobs. Wipe down a surface in one direction and not back and forth. Check with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approved disinfectant products.

Employers should provide disposable wipes so that workers can easily wipe down commonly used surfaces. Separate cleaning supplies should be used for kitchens and bathrooms; color-code cleaning cloths for specific areas so there is no cross-contamination.

Good communication between the business, facility administration and custodial or facility maintenance staff is essential. Typical custodial services include sweeping and mopping floors; dusting; vacuuming and shampooing carpets; removing trash; cleaning surfaces; tile and grout cleaning; window washing; moving furniture and lifting bulk items for cleaning; and routine disinfecting.



#### KEY POINT #4

## Professional Decontamination

It is essential to monitor reliable news sources and heed information provided by local and regional public health departments about potential breakouts of infectious disease. Engage a company that provides biohazard and decontamination services in the event that your business or property is affected by a contagious disease.

Check to make sure that the company follows OSHA, EPA, CDC and other state/local health agency regulations, as well as complies with proper certifications, training requirements and insurance requirements. They should have resources to act quickly and implement precautions to protect your employees, customers and business.

They will complete an initial walk-through to assess the area. Fully trained and protected teams will employ specialized equipment and specific procedures to contain affected areas to prevent cross-contamination. They will work to remove all traces of biological materials; disinfect and deodorize surfaces and air; and test to confirm that the affected areas are free of pathogens.



## KEY POINT #5

# How ATI Can Help

ATI's Virus Response Team has extensive experience decontaminating facilities and contents exposed to Ebola, norovirus, MRSA and other viral contagions such as COVID-19. ATI is ready to be deployed to your site immediately to mount the most appropriate response, from precautionary, potential exposure to confirmed contamination.

Virus Response Team members are medically cleared, trained and tested for respiratory protection device use. Technicians are skilled in the application of cleaning products, proper chemical handling and safety protocols.

Armed with state-of-the-art equipment such as thermal imaging, vaporized hydrogen peroxide, ultraviolet light and EPA-registered cleaners, ATI is prepared to deliver a full-service approach to biohazard decontamination that exceeds industry standards and fully complies with location, national and international regulations.

Every site presents different challenges, exposure scenarios and operational complexities. ATI's customized treatments are designed to address the unique nature of each facility and minimize the impact to occupants and operations.

The Virus Response Team offers three levels of protection.



## KEY POINT #5 (CONTINUED)

### Level One: Precautionary

Level one protection is for businesses with no known contamination seeking to maintain safe and sanitary environments for customers and employees. ATI's trained biohazard cleanup technicians conduct daily or twice-daily disinfection using EPA-registered chlorine or peroxide-based cleaners and proper disposal of waste. Treatments can be performed during off-hours to avoid business interruption.

### Level Two: Possible Exposure

Businesses or public spaces with suspected exposure (an infected person inside the building) will require detailed 10-foot down disinfection and deep-clean decontamination performed by ATI's team of certified biohazard cleanup technicians specially qualified for respiratory cleanup.

### Level Three: Confirmed Exposure

Businesses or public spaces with confirmed exposure will require a customized protocol for the site to ensure thorough and proper decontamination. ATI will work with clients to develop a custom plan that protects the health of employees, customers and communities and mitigates impact to the operations of the enterprise.

### All levels employ the following methods and technologies as appropriate:

- EPA-registered chlorine or peroxide-based cleaners
- Ultraviolet (UV) light disinfection
- Vaporized Hydrogen Peroxide (VHP) mist fogger
- Donning and doffing of personal protection equipment (PPE), including respiratory protection
- Disposal of waste marked as biohazard
- Decontamination team health monitoring





## About American Technologies, Inc.

Established in 1989 by Gary Moore, American Technologies, Inc., is the nation's largest family-owned and operated restoration contractor. Headquartered in Anaheim, Calif., the company specializes in restoration, environmental and reconstruction services following natural and man-made disasters with an unwavering commitment to customer service. To learn more, visit [ATIrestoration.com](http://ATIrestoration.com) or call (833) 400-0056.



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