

VIDEO

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Watch: Coping With COVID-19 in the Workplace

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Rob Wilson, president of Employco USA (<https://www.employco.com/>), offers advice on how employers should protect workers from contracting the coronavirus in the workplace, and what action to take when they do.

It's not a question of

if

one of your employees contracts COVID-19, but

when

, says Wilson. Businesses need to know how to react to the presence of the virus. At the same time, they must balance the need for ensuring worker safety with the necessity of keeping the business afloat.

One of the most common measures being adopted by companies today is the installation of devices for taking workers' temperatures. Mounted hands-free units make the process easy to carry out, and yield immediate results. In addition, companies are having their employees fill out questionnaires about whether they are experiencing any symptoms of the disease, know anyone who has it, or are awaiting the results of a test. Illinois rules dictate that workers on the job must undergo a temperature test for a second time if they're been in the building for more than five hours.

Many companies are redesigning office space in line with the need for social distancing, by positioning desks farther apart, installing physical barriers such as plexiglass between desks, and limiting the number of people allowed to occupy certain spaces at the same time. They must also take into account the building's air-filtration systems, settings for which might be beyond their control if they're tenants in a large office tower. Even tougher to solve is the problem of elevators, where social distancing is impossible for more than two to four people.

When a worker contracts a disease, it can be difficult to determine whether or not it happened on that job, and how the individual in question is affected by worker's compensation laws, Wilson says.