



# Infectious Disease Control

## Policy

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## Document Information

Revision:	Rev. 0
Approval Date:	July 9, 2020
Approved by:	Jason Blake
Document Title	Infectious Disease Control
Document ID Number:	POLI-ADM-542
Information Security:	
Created:	May 2020
Department/Committee:	Human Resources
Author/Owner:	Jennifer Golynsky
Last Edited:	
File Name:	
Template:	

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## 1 Purpose

This document outlines the proactive steps SERC will take to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak.

### 1.1 Business Need

This policy identifies the steps necessary to safeguard the workplace in order to carry out SERC business.

## 2 Scope

This document applies to all SERC employees.

## 3 Responsible SERC Group

SERC Human Resources is responsible for creation and maintenance of this policy.

## 4 Review and Re-approval Requirements

This document will be reviewed every annually or as appropriate for possible revision. SERC Executive Leadership will re-approve the existing or revised document and make it available to SERC employees.

## 5 Policy

This policy outlines the proactive steps SERC will take to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It is the goal of SERC during any such time period to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

SERC is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an illness or outbreak.

### 5.1 Preventing the Spread of Infection in the Workplace

SERC will take a number of steps to minimize, to the extent practicable, exposure to infectious diseases in the workplace. To do so, SERC will provide a clean workplace, by providing the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently touched. This includes bathrooms, breakrooms, conference rooms, door handles, and railings that are within SERC's leased premise. A committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control.

SERC asks all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. As appropriate, SERC recommends strategies that employees can take to protect themselves both inside and outside the

workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious—frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. SERC will also install alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas.

Unless otherwise notified, SERC's normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place during an infectious disease outbreak. Individuals who believe they may face particular challenges reporting to work during an infectious disease outbreak should take steps to develop any necessary contingency plans. For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative work schedule.

Additionally, during the event of an outbreak, SERC will limit or prohibit visitors, vendors and other non-employees during this time.

### 5.1.1 Limiting Business Travel

During an outbreak, all nonessential business travel should be avoided until further notice. Employees who travel as an essential part of their job should consult with management on appropriate actions. Business-related travel outside the United States will not be authorized until further notice.

If possible, employees should avoid crowded public transportation when possible. Alternative scheduling options, ride-share resources, and/or parking assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Employees should contact human resources for more information.

### 5.1.2 Telecommuting

SERC acknowledges that an employee's ability to travel to and from the workplace may be impacted by local, state, or federal authorities during an infectious disease outbreak. To the extent that an employee is prohibited or otherwise not able to maintain their in-office schedule, requests to telecommute or work from home will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All requests for temporary telecommuting should be submitted to your manager for consideration.

### 5.1.3 Staying Home When Ill

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. SERC provides paid time off (PTO) and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Please see the Employee Handbook for more information about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Short Term Disability (STD) benefits.

During an infectious disease outbreak, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill. Certain symptoms may be indicative of the disease and should be monitored closely if they are not thought to be caused by other, non-

communicable conditions. Examples of symptoms may include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue.

An employee who has a fever at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or who is experiencing coughing or shortness of breath or other infectious disease symptoms, will be required to leave the workplace. The employee should monitor his or her symptoms and call a doctor or use telemedicine if concerned about the symptoms.

Any such employee may return to work when the employee meets the health guidelines established by Federal/OSHA, State, or local guidelines for the current health crisis. Examples may include:

- He or she has had no fever for at least three (3) days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; AND
- Any respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) have improved; AND
- At least ten (10) days have passed since the symptoms began.

An employee may return to work earlier if a doctor confirms the cause of an employee's fever or other symptoms is not communicable and releases the employee to return to the workplace in writing.

An employee who experiences fever and/or respiratory symptoms while home should not report to the workplace. Instead, the employee should contact his or her immediate supervisor for further direction.

Employees should not report to the workplace if a member of their household or someone they have caregiver responsibilities for is ill or experiencing any symptoms related to the infectious disease.

### 5.1.4 Requests for Medical Information and/or Documentation

During an outbreak, employees will be required to self-certify the status of their health, through a document of SERC's choosing, each day they plan to come into the office or attend in person meetings with SERC employees, clients, board members or the public. This document will be kept confidential as described in the following section, Confidentiality of Medical Information.

If an employee has reported feeling ill or shows symptoms, it may become necessary to request information from the employee and/or their health care provider. Please keep in mind that an absence related to a current infectious disease outbreak may also be subject to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). SERC may request medical information to confirm any employee's need to be absent, to show whether and how an absence relates to the infection, and to confirm that it is appropriate for you to return to the workplace. In this situation, the employee would be provided with the required forms and authorizations for release of information.

### 5.1.5 Confidentiality of Medical Information

Our policy is to treat any medical information received as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of medical information is in limited circumstances with supervisors, managers, first aid and safety personnel, and government officials as required by law. Medical information is stored separately from an employee's regular personnel file.

## 5.2 Social Distancing Guidelines for Workplace Infectious Disease Outbreaks

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, SERC may implement the following social distancing guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease among employees.

*During the workday*, employees may be requested to:

1. Wear a mask when leaving your personal office or workspace, when walking in hallways or entering common areas or meeting with others.
2. Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.
3. If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room, and sit at least one yard from each other. If possible, avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
4. Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops, and training sessions.
5. Avoid congregating in workrooms, pantries, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.
6. Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid lunchrooms and crowded restaurants).
7. Encourage members and others to request information and orders via phone and e-mail in order to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the orders, materials and information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.

### 5.2.1 Outside Activities

Employees might be encouraged to the extent possible to:

1. Avoid public transportation and carpooling (walk, cycle, drive by yourself) or go early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation.
2. Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where employees might come into contact with contagious people.

## Document Revision Information

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Revision	Revision Date	Revised by	Comments
0.0	July 9, 2020	J. Golynsky	Original Issue