As cases of COVID-19 multiply across the country, with new restrictions being handed down from all levels of government on a daily and hourly basis, companies large and small face a variety of challenges in keeping their employees safe while at the same time maintaining business operations. While seeking good employment law counsel is critical as questions arise, below are ten tips for addressing personnel issues in your workplace.

1. Suspend standard attendance policies until circumstances return to normal. Same goes for requirements concerning obtaining doctor’s notes for medical absences.

2. For employees who can work remotely, allow and encourage them to do so. For hourly employees working from home, make sure they understand how they are supposed to keep track of their time.

3. Establish a protocol for employees to report if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, have been exposed to someone who has, or have travelled to an area on the CDC’s warning lists.

4. Encourage employees who are feeling ill to stay home and require employees experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to do so.

5. If you receive information that an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, alert your workforce, but do not reveal the name of the employee or the employee’s confidential medical information.

6. Do not make decisions based on an employee’s perceived susceptibility to COVID-19 (e.g., age or national origin) and encourage your workforce not to make assumptions about their co-workers.

7. Limit non-essential business travel.

8. Instruct employees who do remain in the office on the importance of maintaining proper hygiene and limit in-person meetings and other interactions.

9. Stay tuned for legal developments affecting employers, such as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act currently making its way through Congress.

10. Take a deep breath and, when in doubt, contact experienced employment counsel.
Attorneys

Elizabeth C. Burneson
Andrew P. Sherrod

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