

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 – 9:00 am

The Virginia Dept. of Health has announced the first 2 "presumptive positive" (e.g. the CDC has not confirmed the results yet) cases of COVID-19 in Hampton Roads. The 2 cases are travel associated - a couple in Virginia Beach traveled on a Nile River cruise that has recently reported a number of COVID-19 cases. There have now been 8 cases identified in VA. At this time, all of the cases reported in VA are travel related and there is no evidence of community transmission in VA.

As discussed earlier, the primary goal for all of us should be helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as much as possible; principally, by promoting good hand hygiene, cough etiquette and social distancing. The more limited (and slower) the spread of COVID-19, the better the systems we all have in place will be at adjusting to virus and its impacts.

While community transmission has not yet been identified in VA, it is likely only a matter of time before it is. Now is the time for employers, businesses, schools and individuals to review/develop Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) and personal preparedness plans to prepare for the potential of increased absenteeism, potential isolated closures/quarantines and other disruptions caused by the virus.

There are a number of excellent resources available from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) (www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus). I encourage you to review the information these sites have specific to your various industries/concerns.

Current advice on the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is exactly the same advice to prevent the spread of colds and flu. **Practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers regularly. Those that develop a cough, or a sneeze should do so into a tissue or the inside of their elbow, washing their hands afterwards.**