



# COVID-19 Variants

The Next Three Seconds Protects Your Life, Your Loved Ones, Your Livelihood®

## The N3L3 philosophy:

our approach to protecting workers from fatal and life-changing events.

*Eastern Alliance is here to help. To learn more about Eastern's N3L3 program and access other safety resources, sign in and visit the Safety Tools on [www.easternalliance.com](http://www.easternalliance.com), or contact your Risk Management Consultant for assistance*

**1.855.533.3444**

COVID-19 has been a challenge for all types of businesses, regardless of the scope and operations that are performed. It has been detrimental to some while others have completely changed their operations when the virus first hit the U.S. in a mass manner in March of 2020. And here we are, preparing for and responding to the next wave or variant of the virus. The first time around was difficult and caught us off guard, but we can now be better equipped. In addition to protecting the health and safety of employees, customers, friends, and love ones, we must also do our part to not overwhelm the healthcare system that will be handling not only COVID-19, but also the seasonal influenza, RSV, and other health conditions.

There are many things that need to be considered in case our businesses and local communities are hit with another major wave or variant of the virus. Let us not forget to evaluate, discuss and review the below items with the appropriate team members.

1. Do we currently have enough necessary protective and cleaning supplies for another wave? (i.e. hand sanitizer, masks, gloves and other PPE)
  - a. Have we identified suppliers or agencies that can provide the above mentioned supplies?
  - b. Have we evaluated our burn rate of the supplies to confirm current stock is adequate? Do we have a defined plan to address another virus outbreak?
2. Have previous plans been reviewed and updated with information that has changed or evolved?
3. Has the company assigned a person(s) responsible for monitoring changing national, state, and local guidelines for company locations?
4. If the operations will change again, how will this be communicated to the employees of the organization in an efficient manner?
5. Assuming a shutdown is not required, has the organization identified thresholds to determine how your operations will continue or be altered based on presence of virus, case numbers, hospitalizations, hospital capacity? (i.e. when employees will travel, at what point work from home would be initiated, etc.)
6. Have you identified and evaluated control measures to prevent spread on-site including:
  - a. Are there separate entrances and exits identified to minimize traffic?
  - b. Have you created symptom screening plans and procedures identifying who will be assigned, where and how the process will be conducted, supplies needed, and controls for protecting screener employee?
  - c. Have you formalized the cleaning process to ensure increased cleaning frequency is continued?
  - d. Have you identified an on-call emergency cleaning service that can come to your facilities in a timely manner?
  - e. Can safe work distances be provided for the employees if they remain in the office or facility? Plan to keep cohorts of employees that do work together if possible. Ask employees to stay in their designated work areas (not visiting other departments) unless necessary.

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- f. Have you addressed employee lunch or breakroom practices (i.e. allowed to go off site, eat at desk, max allowed in the breakroom, and staggered breaks)?
  - g. Are there any industry-specific items that should be discussed and/or addressed with employees?
7. Do you have testing guidelines in place for the employees? Will it be required of all employees on a routine basis or only as needed when symptoms arise? If based off of symptoms will there be a daily questionnaire to be filled for every employee and guest on site with contact information noted?
8. Has the organization created policies regarding return to work following the presence of symptoms, exposure, or positive COVID-19 test?
9. Has the company established a threshold at which group travel should be halted?
10. If applicable, has the company addressed the added motor vehicle exposures if prohibiting group travel?
11. Have you considered controls for new, additional, or changing exposures that may not have been present during previous waves? (i.e. new locations, seasons, etc.)
  - a. For example, what will be your protocol for employees shoveling and using snow plow equipment with masks?
  - b. If they wear masks can they breathe properly to not cause other issues? Are glasses fogging up?
  - c. Another example, many were conducting screening outside and the company needs to evaluate if this is still feasible.
  - d. Has the organization identified roles or titles that must be on-site?
  - e. Additionally, have employees been surveyed on their ability or willingness to work from home or the office?

### Additional items to remember and discuss during these times.

1. Don't let your guard down about a potential new wave or variant; just because your organization wasn't affected previously doesn't mean you won't be if another wave or variant hits. If you were affected previously, have extra precautions in place to prevent outbreaks.
2. Some people and their families have been drastically affected by the virus while some have not. Let us all be respectful and considerate by following proper guidelines being put in place by the CDC and our local businesses/communities.
3. Make time to get outside, get fresh air and soak up some sunshine. Sitting at your workstation all day without moving around can be tough on your mental and physical health. Let us take care of ourselves so we can be there for our loved ones and take care of others if needed.
4. Keep moral up (encourage employee lunch and chat over zoom, care packages, etc.)
5. Hold wellness campaigns to encourage employees to get their flu shot.
6. Consider monetary incentives or bonuses for staff working during COVID-19.
7. Allow employees to carryover more PTO into the next year and encourage employees to "staycation".
8. Pay attention to co-workers behavior and offer assistance through your company's EAP programs if it appears they are struggling with depression, alcoholism or other substance abuse.

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