



EMPLOYMENT | Ministries of Economy and Health Ordinance Determines Measures to Combat Coronavirus in the Workplace

Ordinance No. 20/2020 of the Ministries of Economy and Health was published on June 19, 2020, and establishes, in compliance with the provisions of Law No. 13.979/2020, measures that must be adopted in work environments for prevention, control and mitigation of transmission risks of COVID-19.

Ordinance No. 20/2020 presents several measures that must be observed by employers whose business establishments are already in operation. Its content does not apply to health services; it does not authorize or determine the reopening of establishments; nor does it replace what is established by regulatory norms, health regulations and measures of health, hygiene and safety at work arising from collective labor agreements.

Among the measures established by Ordinance No. 20/2020, employers must disclose to their employees the guidelines and protocols with the necessary measures for prevention, control and mitigation of transmission risks by COVID-19 and must contain preventive measures in common areas, actions for identification, procedures for reporting signs or symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and instructions on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

It is up to the employer to inform its employees about the contagion forms, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and the employer must extend the information to outsourced employees and others who enter the business establishment. Instructions to employees can be transmitted during training or through safety dialogues, physical or electronic documents (posters, internal regulations, among others), avoiding the use of pamphlets.

Procedures should be adopted so that, as far as possible, employees would avoid touching surfaces with a high frequency of contact (elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, etc.). Resources for hand

hygiene close to the workplace should be made available, including water, liquid soap, disposable paper towel and trash without manual contact or sanitizer, such as 70-percent alcohol.

The company must promote the cleaning and disinfection of workplaces and common areas in the interval of shifts, or whenever there is the appointment of one employee to occupy the workstation of another.

Measures must be taken to increase the distance and reduce personal contact between employees and between them and the external public, with a minimum distance of one meter between such people being maintained. It is also mandatory that there be reorganization of spaces to avoid agglomerations in the work environments, such as cafeterias—which must be cleaned frequently—changing rooms and, if applicable, transportation provided by the company.

The employer must create or revise the procedures for the use, cleaning, packaging and disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other protective equipment used in the organization in light of the risks generated by COVID-19.

Ordinance No. 20/2020 also states that surgical or fabric masks used in the workplace are: (i) provided to all employees; (ii) mandatory use in shared environments or when in contact with other employees or the public; and (iii) made in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health.

The masks must be replaced at least every three hours during use, or when they are dirty or damp, and cannot be shared among employees.

Ordinance No. 20/2020 also establishes: (i) procedures for specific work environments, such as cafeterias and changing rooms; (ii) protocols applicable to employees belonging to risk groups; (iii) necessary conduct in relation to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19; (iv) procedures related to the transportation of employees provided by the company; and (v) measures to resume activities, among others.

Ordinance No. 20/2020 will come into force within 15 days as of its publication in the *Official Gazette* on June 19, 2020, with regard to the supply and use of surgical or tissue masks, provided for in item 7.2 of Annex I. As for the other provisions, it comes into force from the date of its publication and will have effect until the end of the public health emergency declaration, provided for in Ordinance No. 188/GM/MS of 2020.

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