

GHANA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION



GEA.21

21ST JANUARY, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

In view of the recent upsurge in the number of active cases of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) urges all employers to as a matter of urgency revisit and pursue in a strict manner all the protocols outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Government of Ghana in order to contain the spread of the pandemic.

Current information from the Ministry of Health (MOH) show that the spread of the pandemic is on the sharp rise after being contained for several months since it broke out in Ghana on March 15, 2020.

The new strain of the virus which is more severe than the original strain has also been detected by Scientists in Ghana.

In adhering to the containment of the virus, it is essential that all establishments seriously commit to the following protocols to prevent infections at workplaces:

- i. Promote regular and thorough handwashing by employees, contractors and customers.
- ii. Surfaces and tables (e.g., desks tops, door handles, tables and computers) need to be wiped with disinfectants at regular intervals each day because contamination of surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spread.
- iii. Reduce physical meetings and events because there is a risk that people attending the meeting might expose others to the COVID-19 virus.
- iv. Organize work to reduce person-to-person contact, ensuring physical distance at the workplace or implementing remote work arrangements.
- v. Maintain good workplace hygiene and good indoor ventilation.
- vi. Provide adequate facilities (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, signage, and reminders) and encourage workers to practice workplace hygiene (e.g., frequent hand hygiene, avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth).
- vii. Direct workers to stay at home or work from home if they have "flu-like" symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, etc.) regardless of travel or contact history.

- viii. Implement flexible work arrangements (e.g., teleworking), where possible.
- ix. Increase physical space between workers at the workplace.
- x. Implement flexible meetings and delivering services remotely (e.g., holding meetings via video conferencing or phone calls or considering if large gatherings can be rescheduled, staggered or cancelled).
- xi. Change workplace culture (e.g., stop handshaking, workers taking lunch at own desk or outside rather than in the cafeteria or breakrooms, limit sharing of food in the workplace).

Employers are therefore reminded to collaborate with their workers to conform to these basic actions and measures to protect the health and security of employees and their families as well as sustain the enterprise.

The pandemic, since its outbreak in Ghana, has had a telling effect on the activities of both employers and workers. Most employers have had to scale down or shutdown their businesses in response to the various measures implemented by Government to contain the virus. This has in many ways affected the business and employment relations as well as work conditions at the workplace.

According to the 2020 Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) COVID-19 Business Tracker Survey results, 770,000 workers had their wages reduced and 42,000 workers were laid off during Ghana's COVID-19 partial lockdown.

All workers are also reminded to comply strictly with the COVID-19 protocols even after work, when they join their families back at home and in their communities.

The effects of the pandemic place an obligation on all stakeholders (i.e., employers and workers) to adhere strictly to the established protocols to prevent escalation of the pandemic that will necessitate another lockdown and further job losses.

Attention must also be paid to all directives and updates from the Government and MOH regarding the evolution of the pandemic in Ghana.

GEA commends the Government for the policies and strategies adopted so far to contain the spread of the virus and to keep the economy on the path of recovery. The Association also assures Government of its full support and cooperation in our collective obligation to rid Ghana of this pandemic.



ALEX FRIMPONG

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER