

GHANA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION



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PRESS RELEASE

THIRD WAVE OF COVID-19

In view of the third wave of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic currently being experienced in the country, the Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) would like to urge all employers to revisit and apply in a strict manner all the protocols and guidelines outlined by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and National Tripartite Committee (NTC) in order to contain the outbreak.

Current data from the GHS indicates that active cases of the virus are on the rise, and this is largely driven by the new Delta Variant. The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) of the University of Ghana, indicates that the Delta Variant is characterized by high viral loads and requires a longer duration to disappear from the human system, ones contracted.

This therefore implies that urgent preventive measures need to be put in place to ensure that this new variant is not transmitted to the large unvaccinated Ghanaian population.

It suffices to add that employers have a key role to play in containing the spread of the virus at the workplace, and failure to pay heed to the current wave may yield consequences that will threaten the business and economic recovery efforts being made.

In order to pragmatically contain the spread of the virus, it is imperative that all employers and businesses seriously commit to the following protocols and guidelines to prevent infections at workplaces:

- i. Provide adequate facilities (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, signage, and reminders) and encourage workers, contractors and customers to practice workplace hygiene (e.g., frequent hand hygiene, avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth).
- ii. Create the enabling environment for physical distancing at the workplaces through demarcated intervals of at least one (1)-meter intervals.
- iii. Consider the introduction of appropriate shift systems for employees and allow those who can work from home to do so without compromising standards and productivity, where the nature of the business operations permits.
- iv. Reduce physical meetings and events because there is a risk that people attending the meeting might expose others to the COVID-19 virus.

- v. Fumigate and disinfect the workplace regularly. A schedule for the fumigation and disinfection should be pasted on notice boards for the information of workers, customers/clients and other stakeholders.
- vi. Constitute Safety Committees to deal with issues concerning COVID-19. The Safety Committee should appoint Focal Persons who shall have the responsibility of liaising with health professionals in the event of an outbreak of the virus.
- 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. 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).


In his address to the nation on July 25, 2021, His Excellency the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, stated that: ***"It is obvious from the data that we have let our guard down, with many going about their duties in clear breach of and disregard for the protocols. At a time when the economy is on the rebound, and business activities picking up, we must do everything possible to contain this outbreak. We cannot afford to return to the days of partial lockdowns, which brought considerable hardships and difficulties for all of us"***. A monumental obligation therefore lies 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.

GEA therefore wishes to remind all employers to resort to the use of dialogue and 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.

All workers are also reminded to adhere strictly with the COVID-19 protocols and guidelines even after work, when they join their families back at home and in their communities. Workers are also encouraged to comply with employers directives and policies to vaccinate the workforce of their organizations, when the vaccines become available.

The financial implications of the pandemic on employers and businesses are enormous and GEA urges the Government to accelerate the implementation of the **GH¢100 billion Ghana COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support (Ghana CARES) programme** which is designed to cushion businesses and keep the economy on the path of rapid recovery.

The Association also assures Government of its full support and cooperation in our collective obligation to rid Ghana of this pandemic.


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