

## **Urgent: Employer Requirements for Virginia have changed due to COVID-19**

Roanoke Clergy and SPRC Chairs,

Thank you for your immediate attention to this as best you can. As you may already know, there are new state-wide regulations that impact all employers including churches. **Immediate action is required by all employers by this Wednesday, August 26.** Details regarding your responsibility as Virginia Commonwealth employers and guiding information can be found in the document attached.

In July, Virginia became the first state to announce mandatory workplace requirements for all businesses within the Commonwealth. (*You can read the official announcement here: [§16VAC25-220, Emergency Temporary Standard Infectious Disease Prevention: SARS-CoV-2 Virus That Causes COVID-19](#)*).

The Virginia Conference Chancellor has made the materials his firm prepared to assist Virginia businesses available to churches in our Conference because these new requirements of assessment and training apply to all churches. These materials are attached.

Some bullet points of what employers must do:

- Assess their workplace for potential exposure to the virus and classify job tasks and hazards according to the risk levels established by the Standard;
- Inform employees of the methods to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and establish a system for self-assessment and screening;
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for social distancing and sanitization; post signage, and provide personal protective equipment (PPE) where applicable;
- Develop procedures for employees (and subcontractors/temporary employees) to report when they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and to leave the worksite until cleared to return; provide flexible leave arrangements and ensure employees are aware of available leave;
- Prohibit employees and other persons known or suspected to have COVID-19 from reporting to the worksite until either: (i) they test negative twice, do not have a fever, and their respiratory symptoms have improved; or (iii) at least 72 hours have passed since they last had a fever, their respiratory symptoms have improved, at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and a healthcare provider has been consulted;
- Establish a system to receive reports of positive tests by employees, subcontractors, contract workers, and temporary employees present at the workplace within 14 days from the date of the positive test and notify employees, other employers with workers on-site, the building owner, the Virginia Department of Health (“DOH”), and the Virginia

Department of Labor and Industry (“DOLI”) in accordance with the Standard; church must assess their risk level

- Train employees based on the employer’s risk level assessment by August 26, 2020; and
- Create an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan if risk levels are Very High or High, or if risk levels are Medium and the employer has at least 11 employees, and train employees on the Plan by September 25, 2020.

ALL churches need to look at these documents with their HCT and/or Trustees in order to comply with this new state law. **These risk-based assessments and training requirements must be completed by THIS WEDNESDAY, August 26.** Please review them immediately with your HCT and/or Trustees, and make any notifications and/or begin training, as required.

Hopefully, this does not come as a surprise, as it has been in the news recently, but I wanted to be sure that you had these resources to assist you in your assessing and training, and to remind you of the impending deadline. I apologize for the late notice, but I just received the final documents over the weekend.

I know you are all working very hard, but please give this priority, as it is crucially important to keep our staff safe. The plans and documentation you create for this do not need to be sent to me for approval as your reopening plans do, but you must have them by state law.

Doug