

COVID-19 Guidance and Resources for Food Manufacturing & Processing Operations

We're in unprecedented times as we all work to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Zenith has always been a long-term partner for our customers, and our thoughts and well wishes are with those affected. To help you address the unique needs of this pandemic, our Zenith experts have specifically selected the resources in this document to help you deliver information to your employees and help prevent the spread of illness while conducting essential business. We also offer simplified guidance to communicate, inform, and address needs within your operation.

Our experts are available to help you find creative solutions to manage and educate personnel through these challenging times. Safety and HR experts are also ready, through [Zenith Solution Center](#)[®], to answer questions specific to your unique situation.

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1. COMMUNICATION

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Effective communication and leadership support are essential to support your employees and maintain business continuity during this sensitive time. Here are some action points to get you started:

- **Promote accurate information:** Accuracy establishes credibility. Share information from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) about the [signs and symptoms](#) of COVID-19, [who is at risk](#), treatment and care options, when to [seek medical care](#), and [what to do if someone is sick](#).
- **Promote Action:** Provide employees with [expectations](#) that are immediately actionable. Keep [action messages](#) simple, short, and [easy to remember](#). Consider communication barriers such as limited English proficiency, and avoid limiting access to information.
- **Be Credible:** Acknowledge when you don't have enough information to answer a [question](#). Information about this disease increases and changes every day. Work with the appropriate experts to get an answer depending on the situation.
- **Express Empathy:** Disease outbreaks can cause fear and disrupt daily lives. Acknowledging employees' personal feelings, [family and daily life](#) concerns, and other challenges shows you are considering their perspective when addressing issues.
- **Communicate with respect:** Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable. Actively listen to issues and solutions brought up by employees. Acknowledge different [cultural beliefs](#), and work with your team to adapt behaviors and promote understanding.
- **Look for new ways to communicate:** Methods such as audio speakers, conference calls, or text messaging, help communicate with employees quickly. Consider setting up a private web page where employees can get information and regular updates.
- **Focus on health and safety:** Let your team know you're putting extra precautions in place to keep your workplace safe. Encourage them to assist and let them know that not only does their work have value to you, but they as individuals have value, and that you want to ensure their well-being.

2. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

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As COVID-19 understanding increases, health officials are releasing guidelines for maintaining public health. As you implement new policies and expectations, you must clearly communicate these to your employees and confirm these are understood, including:

- Ensure special procedures are in place to meet orders issued by your local [Public Health Department](#) officials, including mandated "Shelter in Place", "Stay at Home" and/or "Employee Health Monitoring."
- Implement a process for employee health monitoring ([sample guidelines](#)). Consult with a medical provider, [EEOC](#) and your Public Health Department for specifics in your area.
- Be responsive to the personal needs of each employee. Populations [at risk](#) include individuals over the age of 65, individuals with underlying health issues, residential care patients, and those who care for these individuals.
- Provide training on COVID-19 [signs, symptoms](#), and [prevention](#). Ensure materials are available in languages employees can understand.
- Provide travel certificates to help employees clarify to authorities their need to travel on essential business ([travel certificate sample- employee](#) & [travel certificate sample- transportation of supplies](#)).
- Implement procedures and expectations to safely [clean and disinfect](#) frequently used surfaces inside and outside food safe controlled environments.
- Determine if additional resources are needed such as portable hand wash stations, break area spaces, portable bathrooms, etc.
- Identify key processes, tasks, and products. Cross-train employees in order to fill backup positions in case key employees must stay home.
- Encourage additional spacing of employees to support safe physical distancing. Consider physical barriers, and institute employee work practices that reduce risk.
- Evaluate and, when possible, increase workplace ventilation rate.
- Understand which of your employees can use alternative work options such as work from home (e.g., administrative staff).
- Update your written safety program with an addendum outlining your [COVID-19 Infection Prevention Plan](#).

- Review your Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Food Safety programs to ensure newly introduced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), physical barriers, and other changes are evaluated and effectively integrated ([Food Safety Resources](#)).
- Define process to communicate with [visitors, vendors, and other external individuals](#).
- Be responsive to [state guidance](#) and respectful of [local authorities'](#) decisions related to that guidance.

3. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

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Facts, education, and personal actions are key elements to slowing the spread of any disease. Set expectations for employees and ensure they:

- [Stay at home](#) if sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Refrain from shaking hands, hugging, or touching others.
- Clean [surfaces](#) before and after use in lockers, break rooms, common areas, and when using shared equipment.
- Avoid touching mouth, nose, and eyes to avoid [transferring germs](#).
- [Cover mouth](#) and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (and immediately discard the tissue). If tissues can't be used inside food safe environments, cover mouth with shoulder or elbow. Then wash hands and/or disinfect gloves.
- Wash/sanitize hands [multiple times](#) daily, including before and after work; during breaks; before and after eating; after coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose; and before and after going to the bathroom.
- [Wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Determine which areas within the facility may use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol as an alternative to sanitize hands.
- Avoid sharing personal items with coworkers (e.g., cell phones, food, dishes, lunch boxes, cups, gloves, writing utensils, etc.).
- During breaks and lunches, store smocks, aprons and other protective garments separate from others.
- Keep a minimum distance of 6 feet from others when possible, per CDC recommendations.
- Limit interaction with other employees during breaks, lunches, and when visiting the bathroom.
- When covering mouth and nose with a cloth face covering, follow [CDC](#) and local Public Health Department guidelines ([sample guidelines](#)) to use, remove, clean and disinfect the face covering.
- Follow CGMP expectations for use of cloth face coverings and any other items brought from home.

4. SYMPTOMATIC AND SICK EMPLOYEES

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Watch for symptoms among employees throughout the COVID-19 alert established by your city and Public Health Department. Employers should be prepared to respond when identifying sick employees. The following guidelines are a good starting point:

Set Expectations:

- Stress the importance for employees to not come to work if either they or anyone who lives with them is sick. [Postings](#) in key areas such as entrances, hallways, and bathrooms can help remind sick employees to stay home.
- Assign a point person to monitor employee attendance and watch for employees experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Consult with your [local Public Health Department](#) or a physician for proper and safe employee health monitoring.
- Require employees to report if they have traveled to a high-risk area in the last 14 days or if they've been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Employees who develop COVID-19 or other flu-like symptoms at work should be sent home immediately.

Employee Health Monitoring:

- Observe employees when they arrive at work.
- Establish a [process](#) to inquire if anyone has experienced fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Some Public Health Departments provide [sample health monitoring](#) procedures.
 - If ill, the employee should be sent home immediately and instructed to contact a medical professional by phone before going to a medical facility. Another option is to contact a doctor who practices via telemedicine. Consider if your employee needs help or guidance to contact a medical professional, or getting information ([English](#) / [Español](#)).

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 infection:

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, your priority is to prevent further spread to other individuals.

- If the employee is at work, send them home.
- Contact your [local Public Health Department](#) and follow the protocols recommended.
- Clean and disinfect areas immediately using proper disinfection procedures and personal protective equipment.
- Document the infected employee's work location, work hours, general and specific work duties, if the employee has traveled to multiple worksites recently, times of travel, and the last day worked.
- Identify anyone who has had contact with the employee while symptomatic and contact them, but maintain confidentiality.
- Sick employees should follow the CDC's guidelines of what to do if they are sick with COVID-19 ([English](#) / [Español](#)).

5. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

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Having procedures in place to maintain a distance of 6 feet between employees will help avoid spreading illness during work activities and breaks:

- Reduce meetings and group gatherings to essential communication only. Limit group size according to guidelines issued by your local Public Health Department.
- Limit the number of people using common areas (e.g., cafeterias, break areas, smoking areas, lobby, and main entrances). Marked seating arrangements helps provide visual reminders.
- Provide adequate time and space for employees to clock in/out while maintaining safe distance from each other. Marked floors helps provide visual reminders.
- Practices to encourage employee physical distancing include:
 - Schedule work in alternating production lines
 - Move/reconfigure workstations to provide additional space.
 - Find opportunities to perform activities ahead of time, or relocate work tasks (e.g., pre-assembly of cartons, pre-staging of raw material, etc.).
 - Adjust timing of tasks that can be done at any time and are non-essential for production flow (e.g. re-work).
- Consider adding physical barriers for areas with limited space and/or higher employee concentration (e.g. sorting, cleaning, and packaging). Ensure all installed physical barriers are included in the daily sanitation schedule and list of surfaces for frequent disinfection.
- When possible, reduce employee interaction by:
 - Dividing employees into smaller groups and limiting interaction outside the group.
 - Assign specific areas for each group.
 - When possible, assign separate break areas and bathroom facilities per group, or designate times for each group to use common areas (clean/disinfect between uses).
- Stagger employee lunches, breaks, shifts.
- Limit interaction among employees during shift changes.

6. WORKPLACE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

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Ensure special procedures are in place to clean and disinfect the workplace:

- Implement procedures and expectations to safely [clean and disinfect](#) frequently used surfaces inside and outside food safe environments.
- Establish new and/or update existing Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) to include any additional surfaces and increased cleaning/disinfection frequency.
- Coordinate time gaps between shifts to allow cleaning, disinfection and air clearance.
- Focus on disinfection of [commonly touched areas](#) including door handles, light switches, bathroom areas, lunchroom tables and chairs, kitchen areas, shared space and facilities, time clock areas, shared computers, and tools.
- Disinfect workstations. If workstation is a direct produce/food contact surface, use EPA-registered [sanitizing agents](#).
- Follow cleaning and disinfection procedures for shared vehicles and equipment (e.g., forklifts, golf carts, trucks, etc.).

- Ensure employees avoid sharing tools and communication devices when possible. If tool sharing is required, properly disinfect between uses with a disinfectant containing at least 70% alcohol.
- Clean common areas multiple times daily, with special disinfection procedures during off hours, before, and after shifts.
- Use [disinfectant spray](#) to [deep clean](#) common areas with special focus on lunchrooms, meeting rooms, time clock areas, office, and all other common rooms and facilities.
- Ensure portable and permanent bathrooms are serviced and [disinfected](#) at regular intervals.

7. RECEIVING AND SHIPPING

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Employees in receiving and shipping areas are susceptible to interaction with vendors, outside drivers and other external individuals. The following are essential protective measures:

Employer Responsibilities:

- Implement a process to communicate company expectations to outside drivers before they access the property. Ensure these are followed.
- Consider alternatives to complete paperwork transactions electronically.
- Designate separate waiting and break areas for outside drivers when possible. Consider discontinuing processes that require access inside receiving and shipping areas.
- Provide temporary hand wash stations at receiving and loading docks and require outside drivers wash their hands before handing paperwork and unload cargo.
- Establish procedures to clean and [disinfect](#) powered industrial trucks and other material handling equipment before and after use (e.g., steering wheels, levers, switches, knobs, handles, seats, seat belts, armrests, mirrors, battery connections, fueling caps, etc.).
- Establish procedures to frequently clean and disinfect doors, doorknobs, ladder handles, handholds, rails, and frequently touched surfaces inside receiving and dispatching areas.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Avoid unnecessary interaction with outside drivers.
- Use disposable protective barriers when exchanging paperwork.
- Never share or exchange writing utensils.
- Disinfect all surfaces touched after each transaction.
- Follow [disinfection](#) and employee hygiene procedures, and physical distancing expectations.

8. TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS, AND DELIVERIES

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It is appropriate and highly recommended to establish and define expectations for drivers and passengers using company vehicles, semi-trucks, and/or delivery vehicles.

Employer Responsibilities:

- Consider implementing a process for health monitoring of all passengers prior to entering the vehicle.
- Help drivers by establishing guidelines for how many passengers are allowed to ride in one vehicle.
- Establish procedures to clean and [disinfect](#) transportation vehicles prior to and after use. This includes frequent contact areas such as stick shift, control levers, steering wheel, doors, seat belts, air conditioner and radio buttons, glove box, mirrors, armrests, and vehicle keys.
- When possible, provide hand sanitizer in vehicles to sanitize hands.
- Look for opportunities to reduce physical handling of bills of lading and other paperwork. Consider processing paper transactions electronically.
- Consider providing a “care package” for drivers that includes a copy of [essential business letter](#), disposable gloves, sanitizers, wipes, and other items drivers may need to interact with external parties.
- Address “shelter in place” and “social distancing” issues affecting your drivers along the route, such as access to [rest areas](#), [meal purchases](#), etc.

Driver Responsibilities:

- Follow [disinfection](#) procedures and be considerate of passengers’ physical distancing when transporting employees.
- Minimize interaction with customers by leaving deliveries at loading docks, doorsteps, or other locations that do not require person-to-person interaction.
- Use disposable protective barriers when exchanging paperwork. Never share or exchange writing utensils.

- Limit social interaction at truck stops and meal breaks.
- When fueling vehicles, use a disposable protective barrier like a paper towel, plastic bag, etc., especially when touching the fuel pump, credit card station, and other surfaces. Once used, dispose of the barrier item and then use hand sanitizer, or wash hands.
- Increase ventilation in vehicles and, when possible, keep windows open when transporting passengers.

Passenger Responsibilities:

- Follow all [precautions](#) to avoid spread of the virus (e.g., maintain physical distancing, use [cloth face coverings](#), cover coughs and sneezes, and wash/sanitize hands).
- Never participate in group travel when sick.
- Assist in cleaning vehicle surfaces they have touched.
- Refrain from eating, drinking, or sharing food in vehicles.

9. VISITORS, CUSTOMERS, AND VENDORS

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If government and/or officials have issued “shelter in place” or “stay at home” orders, you should limit access to only those employees necessary for the operation. Do not allow access to [visitors](#). Apply the following measures for vendors and other external individuals with a business need to access your property:

- Sick individuals should not be allowed to access your property. Place [notices](#) at facilities, offices, and other entrances.
- Vendors must be approved before arriving, and employees should keep 6 feet of separation from any vendor.
- Implement process to communicate company expectations to vendors and other external individuals before accessing the property. Ensure these processes are followed.
- Limit in-person interaction with customers. If possible, emphasize online ordering for direct-to-consumer sales with outside pick-up or delivery options.
- Redirect all on-site deliveries to designated [receiving area](#).

10. DEFINITIONS

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Bill of Lading: Legal document issued by a carrier to a shipper that details the type, quantity, and destination of the goods being carried. A bill of lading is a document of title, a receipt for shipped goods, and a contract between a carrier and shipper.

CGMPs: Current Good Manufacturing Practices* (CGMPs) are the basic operational and environmental conditions required to produce safe foods. These ensure that ingredients, products, and packaging materials are handled safely and that food products are processed in a suitable environment.

Congregate settings: Crowded public places where close contact with others may occur, including shopping centers, movie theaters, and stadiums.


Critical Infrastructure: Body of systems, networks, and assets that are so essential their continued operation is required to ensure security, the economy, and the public’s health and safety. Food and Agriculture is a critical infrastructure sector.

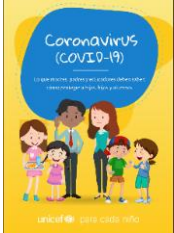
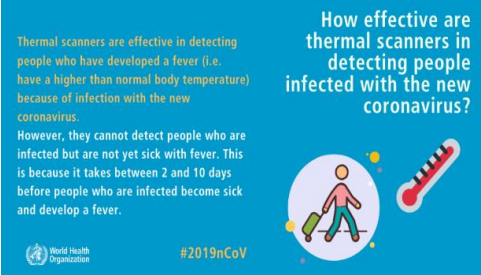
HACCP: Stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points. This is a preventative food safety system in which every step in the manufacture, storage, and distribution of a food product is scientifically analyzed for microbiological, physical, and chemical hazards.


Physical Distancing: Remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible. With COVID-19, the goal of social distancing right now is to slow the outbreak, reduce the chance of infection among [high-risk populations](#), and reduce the burden on health care systems.

Shelter In Place: To seek safety within the building one already occupies, rather than evacuate the area or seek a community emergency shelter.

Travel Certificate: Document to help employers and their employees prove they are allowed to travel within the United States, despite other travel bans. This [travel certificate sample](#) for food processing and manufacturing employees can be customized. There is also a [travel certificate sample](#) for employees transporting food supplies.

<p>GENERAL</p>	<p>Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers OSHA Fact Sheet OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 OSHA Interim Enforcement Response Plan to Protect Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic OSHA Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of COVID-19 CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) U.S. Department of Labor – COVID-19 and the American Workplace Emergency Prevention Measures to Achieve Physical Distancing in Food Manufacturing Facilities as related to COVID-19 U.S. Department of Labor Guidance Explaining Paid Sick Leave And Expanded Family and Medical Leave Under The Families First Coronavirus Response Act Federal Employee Rights Under The Families First Coronavirus Response Act – U.S. Department of Labor and Workforce Development Agency- Resources for Employers and Workers (English /Español) Coronavirus Relief Resources for US Business Owners Coronavirus Emergency Loans: Small Business Checklist California Corona Virus Response Toolkit Travel Certificate Sample –Employees, Transportation of Food Supply Goods</p>
<p>COVID-19 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Print Resources: The CDC has available documents, including posters and handouts on the following topics in a variety of languages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 Days to Slow the Spread – Handout (English / Español) What You Need to Know – Handout (English / Español) Share Facts About COVID-19 – Handout (English / Español) Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease – Poster (English / Español) Videos: Various Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs and Symptoms (Washington Post) – Video (English) Signs and Symptoms (Gobierno de Salud, Perú) – Video (Español) Symptom comparison: COVID-19 vs. Cold vs. Flu vs. Allergies (English) Treatment and Care Options (website available in English & Multiple Languages) EEOC Considerations for Employee Testing CDC Self Checker
<p>EMPLOYEE HYGIENE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CDC Resources include posters and handouts in Spanish, English, and other languages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop the Spread of Germs Poster (English / Español) Wash Your Hands Poster (English / Español) Stay Home When You Are Sick – Poster (English) What to Do if You Are Sick – Poster (English / Español) What You Need to Know About Handwashing – Video (English / Español) CDC- Entry Poster for Employees – Stay Home (English / Español) UMASH – Don't Spread Germs – Wash Your Hands – Poster (English / Español) CDPH Resources: Do I Need to Get Tested for COVID-19? – Poster (English / Español) Cloth Face Coverings -- CA Public Health Department Guidelines (English / Español) 
<p>EMPLOYEE HEALTH MONITORING</p>	<p>Sample Guidelines – Employee Health Monitoring – Madera County: COVID-19 Screening Checklist (English / Español) Letter to Sick Employee Sample – print on company letterhead (English / Español) Isolation/Quarantine Instructions (English / Español)</p>
<p>VISITORS</p>	<p>Entry Poster for Visitors – Facility and Office Doors</p>

<p>WORKPLACE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION</p>	<p>CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines Disinfection Guidance Sheet (English / Español) OSHA Disinfection Decontamination Facts (English / Español) List of Products Meeting Criteria for Use Against COVID-19 Effective Disinfectants to Help Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus Disease on Food Contact Surfaces List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 – Database Comparison of Sanitizers Adequate For Food Contact Surfaces List of Frequently Touched Surfaces (English / Español) Cleaning vs. Sanitizing Work Surfaces – AgSafe – Video (English / Español) Instructions to Build Temporary Hand Washing Station</p>
<p>TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS AND DELIVERIES</p>	<p>COVID-19:Truck Stops and Driver Facilities COVID-19: Slowing the Spread – American Trucking Associations List of Open Restaurant Chains Accommodating Truck Drivers</p>
<p>FOOD SAFETY</p>	<p>FDA:COVID-19 and Food Safety Food Manufacturing Procedures for Sanitization and Diagnosed Employees Food Facility COVID-19 Strategy Checklist (English/Español) Food Industry Recommended Protocols When Employee/Customer Tests Positive for COVID- 19 SOP - Actions when worker is tested for and/or tests positive for COVID-19 virus Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting AB's, CB's and Certified Organizations</p>
<p>WELLNESS & FAMILY</p>	<p>How Should I Explain What Is Happening to My Children? Helping Children Cope with Coronavirus Response CDC Resources if You Are Sick or Caring for Someone SARS-CoV-2 and Domestic Animals Including Pets Guidance for Pet Owners Healthy Habits for Immune Support List of California Food Banks</p> 
<p>MYTHS AND EXPLANATIONS</p>	<p>WHY USE PREVENTIVE MEASURES / LOS PORQUE DE LAS MEDIDAS DE PREVENCIÓN (These resources were developed by Secretaria de Salud, Gobierno de Mexico and unfortunately are not available in English) Why should I wash my hands? (Español) Why should I go to the doctor? (Español) Why should I cover my mouth when sneezing? (Español) Why should I maintain proper hygiene in my surroundings? (Español) Why should I refrain from spitting on the floor? (Español) Why should I refrain from touching my face? (Español) Why should I shelter in place? (Español)</p> <p>MYTH BUSTERS / CLARIFICACION A MITOS Y CREENCIAS</p> <p>The World Health Organization has developed myth busters in English to address emerging questions in the US related to COVID-19 (new myths added frequently).</p> 

<p>Myths and Explanations (Continued...)</p>	<p>The Secretaria de Salud, Gobierno de Mexico has developed myth busters in Spanish to address emerging questions among Latino populations related to COVID-19 (new myths added frequently).</p>	
<p>PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT LINKS</p>	<p>DIRECTORY STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENTS DIRECTORY OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS</p>	
<p>SAMPLE COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION PROGRAM</p>	<p>COVID-19 Infection Prevention Program – Sample Safety Program Addendum Available only through the Zenith Solution Center®. Search for COVID-19 using the Risk Management Library Search Bar</p>	
<p>ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</p>	<p>FDA Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) FAQ (English / Español) Institute of Food Safety at Cornell University – Frequently Asked Questions KPA FAQ: How to Manage COVID-19 Anxiety & Safety at Work Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers</p>	
<p>NEED MORE HELP?</p>	<p>Zenith Solution Center – <i>Ask the Safety Expert</i> and <i>Ask the HR Expert</i></p>	

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