

Ask The Expert: Who Should Take Body Temperature Readings for COVID-19 Screening?



QUESTION

Who should take peoples' body temperature for workplace COVID-19 screening'

ANSWER

No person should take temperatures unless they have proper training.

EXPLANATION

This is obviously a novel situation. Based on the guidance that has emerged, this appears to be best practice for employers:

First Choice: Have a trained nurse or medical professional on-site to take temperatures and/or train non-medical personnel how to do it.

Second Choice: If you don't have trained nurses or medical professionals on-site, designate one or more management-level staffer to do the testing after receiving appropriate training that covers, at a minimum:

- How to use, wash, clean and disinfect the thermometer or temperature-taking equipment;
- How to use proper PPE for temperature-taking;
- How to interpret the results, including what to do in the event a result is out of whack with common sense, e.g., a temperature reading that is obviously too high or too low; and
- How to record the results.

Be sure to keep written documentation of the training, including:

- Who provided and received it;
- The date it was provided;
- What it covered; and

- The basis for concluding that the trainee understood and was capable of applying the training, e.g., a post-training demonstration.

Last but not least, try to deploy temperature-taking that is as minimally invasive and easy-to-use as possible, e.g., scanning systems instead of thermometers.

Competency Checklist for COVID-19 Medical Screeners

If you're performing body temperature checks as part of COVID-19 medical screening, make sure it's done by health professionals or non-medical professionals at the site with appropriate training. Use this Checklist of required competencies to ensure temperature-takers have the necessary training.

Medical Screening Personnel Skill/Competency Checklist

To be completed after training and before screening performed:

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

Job title: _____

| Skill/Competency | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| Understands need to screen workers and visitors for fever, respiratory symptoms, travel to affected areas and/or contact with/exposure to individuals with history of symptoms or travel to affected areas | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to explain to workers and visitors purpose and need to perform screening | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to explain to workers and visitors need to practice infection control practices inside facility | | | |
| Understands and demonstrates use of infection control requirements for cleaning and disinfecting temperature scanner or thermometer before and after each use | | | |
| Demonstrates proper, safe and effective use of temperature scanner or thermometer | | | |
| Demonstrates proper use of required PPE | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to interpret results and make appropriate decisions about whether to grant worker/visitor entry, including exercise of respectful and effective techniques to deny admission to individuals who refuse or fail screening | | | |
| Demonstrates proper screening result documentation practices | | | |