

# GUIDANCE FROM CISA: *COVID-19 & "Essential Businesses"*



As U.S. States battle COVID-19 by issuing additional "stay at home/shelter in place" orders and require "non-essential" businesses to close, we wanted to highlight some of the latest industry recommendations to ensure worker and workplace safety in those organizations considered "essential businesses."

Even though many of us working in the energy and manufacturing industry are "essential businesses," we still feel that while essential, all job sites and places of work pose risks for spreading COVID-19. It is therefore critical that all businesses who fall under what the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) deem as "essential businesses" heed the advice of health officials and follow the prescribed safety guidelines.

It's for this reason that we have taken the step to safeguard SBT's offices, jobsites, and manufacturing plant, and we put this eGuide together so your business can do the same. Our goal is to share with you, our industry partners, the latest best practices, essential guidelines, and recommendations from OSHA, CISA, and the CDC.

While the current COVID-19 pandemic is ever-changing, and at some point, will subside completely, we feel that many of these best practices will prove to be essential lessons that last long into the future. While not every single one of these measures will make sense to implement in perpetuity, many should live on to ensure the health and safety of employees, clients, and the general public.

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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The guidance detailed in this eGuide is not a standard or regulation, and it creates no legal obligations. It contains recommendations from third-party sources that are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist industry partners in providing a safe and healthful workplace. Please be sure to consult local authorities to ensure compliance with specific regional, statewide, and federal laws.

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### GUIDANCE FROM CISA: COVID-19 & “ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES”

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is the government body that “... executes the Secretary of Homeland Security’s authorities to secure critical infrastructure.” In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and through consultation with other federal agencies, CISA has developed an advisory for what they deem to be “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce” members/organizations. As disclosed by CISA:

*“This list is advisory in nature. It is not, nor should it be considered, a federal directive or standard. Additionally, this advisory list is not intended to be the exclusive list of critical infrastructure sectors, workers, and functions that should continue during the COVID-19 response across all jurisdictions. Individual jurisdictions should add or subtract essential workforce categories based on their own requirements and discretion.”*

This advisory list has become a standard reference for many state-led orders that require businesses to close. Based on research conducted by SBT Alliance and our industry partners, the CISA advisory list has been referred to by at least 25 “stay-at-home/shelter-in-place” orders. Let’s take a more in-depth look at the areas that likely apply to many of our industry partners.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS

Functioning critical infrastructure is imperative during the response to the COVID-19 emergency for both public health and safety as well as community wellbeing. Certain critical infrastructure industries have a special responsibility in these times to continue operations.

This advisory guidance, and accompanying list are intended to support state, local, tribal, territorial and industry partners in identifying the critical infrastructure sectors and the essential workers needed to maintain the services and functions. Americans depend on critical infrastructure, and those businesses need to be able to operate resiliently during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document gives advisory guidance on defining essential critical infrastructure workers. Promoting the ability of such workers to continue to work during periods of community restriction, access management, social distancing, or closure orders/directives is crucial to community resilience and continuity of essential functions.



The following list of identified essential critical infrastructure workers is intended to be overly inclusive, reflecting the diversity of industries across the United States.

## ENERGY

- Workers supporting the energy sector, regardless of the energy source (including but not limited to nuclear, fossil, hydroelectric, or renewable), segment of the system, or infrastructure the worker is involved in, or who are needed to monitor, operate, engineer, and maintain the reliability, safety, environmental health, and physical and cybersecurity of the energy system
- Energy/commodity trading/scheduling/marketing functions, who can't perform their duties remotely
- IT and OT technology for essential energy sector operations including support workers, customer service operations, energy management systems, control systems, and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, and energy sector entity data centers, cybersecurity engineers, and cybersecurity risk management

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- Workers supporting the energy sector through renewable energy infrastructure (including, but not limited to wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen, ocean, geothermal, and/or hydroelectric), including those supporting construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, monitoring, and logistics
- Workers and security staff involved in nuclear re-fueling operations
- Providing services related to energy sector fuels (including, but not limited, petroleum [crude oil], natural gas, propane, natural gas liquids, other liquid fuels, nuclear, and coal), supporting the mining, processing, manufacturing, construction, logistics, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, security, waste disposal and storage, and monitoring of support for resources
- Environmental remediation/monitoring, limited to immediate critical needs technicians
- Manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary to maintain production, maintenance, restoration, and service at energy sector facilities (across all energy sector segments)

### **ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY**

- Workers who maintain, ensure, or restore, or are involved in the development, transportation, fuel procurement, expansion, or operation of the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric power, including call centers, utility workers, engineers, retail electricity, constraint maintenance, and fleet maintenance technicians—who cannot perform their duties remotely
- Workers at coal mines, production facilities, and those involved in manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance and monitoring at coal sites which is critical to ensuring the reliability of the electrical system
- Workers who produce, process, ship, and handle coal used for power generation and manufacturing
- Workers needed for safe and secure operations at nuclear generation, including but not limited to, the broader nuclear supply chain, supplying parts to maintain nuclear equipment, fuel manufacturers, and fuel components used in the manufacturing of fuel

- Workers at renewable energy infrastructure (including, but not limited to wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen, geothermal, and/or hydroelectric), including those supporting construction, manufacturing, transportation, permitting, operation/maintenance, monitoring, and logistics
- Workers at generation, transmission, and electric black start facilities
- Workers at reliability coordinator, balancing authorities, and primary and backup Control Centers, including but not limited to independent system operators, regional transmission organizations, and local distribution control centers
- Mutual assistance personnel which may include workers from outside of the state or local jurisdiction
- Vegetation management and traffic control for supporting those crews
- Environmental remediation/monitoring workers limited to immediate critical needs technicians
- Instrumentation, protection, and control technicians
- Essential support personnel for electricity operations
- Generator set support workers such as diesel engineers used in power generation including those providing fuel

### **PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES**

- Workers who support the operation, inspection, and maintenance of essential public works facilities and operations, including bridges, water and sewer main breaks, fleet maintenance personnel, construction of critical or strategic infrastructure, traffic signal maintenance, emergency location services for buried utilities, maintenance of digital systems infrastructure supporting public works operations, and other emergent issues
- Workers such as plumbers, electricians, exterminators, builders, contractors, HVAC technicians, landscapers, and others who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, essential operation of residences, businesses, and buildings such as hospitals, senior living facilities, and any temporary construction required to support COVID-19 response

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- Workers who support public utilities, such as road and line clearing, to ensure the availability of and access to needed facilities, transportation, energy, and communications
- Workers who ensure the effective removal, storage, and disposal of residential and commercial solid waste and hazardous waste, including landfill operations
- Workers who support the operation, inspection, and maintenance of essential dams, locks, and levees
- Workers who support the inspection and maintenance of aids to navigation, and other government provided services that ensure continued maritime commerce

### CRITICAL MANUFACTURING

- Workers necessary for the manufacturing of metals (including steel and aluminum), industrial minerals, semiconductors, as well as materials and products needed for medical supply chains
- Supply chains associated with transportation, energy, communications, information technology, food and agriculture, chemical manufacturing, nuclear facilities, wood products, commodities used as fuel for power generation facilities
- Manufacturers assisting in the operation of dams, water and wastewater treatment, processing and reprocessing of solid waste, emergency services, and the defense industrial base. Additionally, workers needed to maintain the continuity of these manufacturing functions and associated supply chains, and workers necessary to maintain a manufacturing operation in warm standby
- Workers necessary for the manufacturing of materials and products needed to manufacture medical equipment and personal protective equipment
- Workers necessary for mining and production of critical minerals, materials and associated essential supply chains, and workers engaged in the manufacture and maintenance of equipment and other infrastructure necessary for mining production and distribution
- Workers who produce or manufacture parts or equipment that support continued operations for any essential services and increase in remote workforce (including computing and communication devices, semiconductors, and equipment such as security tools for Security Operations Centers or data centers)



### COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

- Workers who support the supply chain of building materials from production through application/installation, including cabinetry, fixtures, doors, cement, hardware, plumbing, electrical, heating/cooling, refrigeration, appliances, paint/coatings, and employees who provide services that enable repair materials and equipment for essential functions
- Workers supporting ecommerce through distribution, warehouse, call center facilities, and other essential operational support functions
- Workers in hardware and building materials stores, consumer electronics, technology and appliances retail, and related merchant wholesalers and distributors—with reduced staff to ensure continued operations
- Workers distributing, servicing, repairing, and installing residential and commercial HVAC systems, boilers, furnaces as well as other heating, cooling, refrigeration, and ventilation equipment

\*Footnote: This section has been pulled directly from [CISA](#).



### WORKPLACE & EMPLOYEE SAFETY FOR “ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES”

The health and wellbeing of employees, clients, and the general public is at the heart of every business. So, while organizations, both large and small, strategize on how best to respond to COVID-19, we wanted to share some of the latest guidance from the CDC and the steps SBT Alliance is taking to ensure the health and safety of our employees, industry partners, and public at large.

### CDC GUIDANCE: PREPARING WORKPLACES FOR COVID-19

According to the latest guidance for businesses and employers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

*“...employers should plan to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of disease transmission in the community and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most American workers will likely experience low (caution) or medium exposure risk levels at their job or place of employment (see [OSHA guidance for employers pdf](#) for more information about job risk classifications).”*

***You can also learn more about these guidelines in our [eGuide “How Do ‘Shelter in Place’ and ‘Social Distancing’ Orders Impact My Job Site.”](#)***

It is, of course, recommended that all employers coordinate with their [state](#) and [local](#) health officials to ensure that timely and accurate information to guide appropriate responses to the ever-evolving situation, per instruction from the CDC.

### STEPS FOR REDUCING TRANSMISSION AMONG EMPLOYEES

Here are the recommended steps as outlined by the CDC to reduce the transmission among employees. While many businesses have received orders to close operations, for those businesses that remain open as “essential businesses,” these steps are critical:

#### **1. Actively Encourage Sick Employees to Stay Home:**

- Employees who have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.

- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue [home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#).

### **2. Identify Where and How Workers Might Be Exposed to COVID-19 at Work:**

- See [OSHA COVID-19](#) webpage for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and [guidance for employers](#), including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at [higher risk for serious illness](#), such as [older adults](#) and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers, and visitors, or to telework if possible.

### **3. Separate Sick Employees:**

- Employees who appear to have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

### **4. Employees Should Educate Themselves on How They Can Reduce the Spread of COVID-19:**

- Employees can [take steps to protect themselves](#) at work and at home. Older people and people with serious chronic medical conditions are at [higher risk for complications](#).
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.

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- Employees should stay home if they are sick, except to get medical care. [Learn what to do if you are sick.](#)
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. [Learn what to do if someone in your house is sick.](#)
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. [Learn more about coughing and sneezing etiquette on the CDC website.](#)
- Clean AND disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, [use products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2external icon, the cause of COVID-19](#), and are appropriate for the surface.
- Avoid using other employees’ phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice social distancing by [avoiding large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately six feet or two meters) from others when possible.

### HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

If your business falls under the classification of essential, you play a critical role, ensuring vital U.S. infrastructures remain operational. As such, the CDC has listed the following recommendations to ensure business operations maintain healthy work environments.

#### ***1. Support Respiratory Etiquette and Hand Hygiene For Employees, Customers, and Worksite Visitors:***

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.

- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other work areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Discourage handshaking. Encourage the use of other non-contact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands](#) webpages for more information.

### **2. Perform Routine Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection:**

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
  - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
  - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. [A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#) is available on the EPS website. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly-used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools, and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. [To disinfect, use products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2](#) the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

### ***3. Perform Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection After Persons Suspected/Confirmed to Have COVID-19 Have Been in the Facility:***

- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).

### ***4. Advise Employees Before Traveling to Take Additional Preparations:***

- Check the [CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from countries with travel advisories, and information for aircrew, can be found on the [CDC website](#).
- Advise employees to [check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) before starting travel and notify their supervisor. Employees should stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice.
- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

### ***5. Take Care When Attending [Meetings and Gatherings](#):***

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary.
- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in person.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

### HOW SBT ALLIANCE AND INTEGRATED ADVANCED CONTROLS ARE PROTECTING OUR EMPLOYEES, CLIENTS, AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE

Now that we’ve reviewed CDC’s in-depth safety guidelines, we’d like to share with you some of the many steps and best practices that SBT Alliance and our internal division, Integrated Advanced Controls, are doing to ensure the health and wellbeing of employees.

As many of our industry partners already know, the formation of SBT Alliance was rooted in marrying three individual companies, Direct Discount Lighting (DDL); Integrated Advanced Controls (IAC); and Glued Solutions (GSI). Our manufacturing arm, Integrated Advanced Controls, has taken many aggressive steps to ensure the health and wellbeing of all plant workers. SBT Alliance as a whole has instated a slew of measures to ensure the health and safety of employees, partners, and the public at large.

### GOING THE DISTANCE FROM HOME

One of the many things that SBT Alliance has instituted company-wide is to have employees work from home when possible. Over the last two years, SBT Alliance has made significant investments to create an entirely cloud-based organization that allows us to go the distance from anywhere. Since our core team members can provide the same level of technical and consultative service to our clients from anywhere, there’s no need to have them in our offices.



### ON-SITE SAFETY MEASURES

While the classification of “essential business” may feel like permission to carry on operations as usual, the truth of the matter is: it is even more critical that “essential businesses” implement crucial safeguards to protect employees, on-site workers, and the public at large.

It is with this important lesson in mind that SBT Alliance has instituted the following on-site guidelines for all employees and industry partners conducting essential work on job sites:

#### **1. Social Distancing**

While performing all on-site work, employees, and contractors are required to abide by the CDC’s social distancing requirements by maintaining separation of at least six feet from others—this includes job site meetings.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING





### 2. Face Coverings

Per recommended guidelines by the CDC, all on-site workers must adorn cloth face coverings, even when meeting for job site meetings and when working individually in separate spaces.



### CDC GUIDELINES REGARDING CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

*“The COVID-19 virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.*

*The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators.*

*Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.”*

### **3. Gloves**

All on-site workers are to adorn gloves when working.



### **4. Hand Sanitizer**

All on-site workers should be provided with sanitizing solution with at least 60% alcohol content.



### 5. Limited On-site Access

All on-site workers are limited to the time they spend at the site. The majority of SBT clients are currently vacated, which provides an ideal opportunity for necessary maintenance work while spaces are empty of occupants.



Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all employees and industry partners is critical to the success of any on-site work we carry out. As an “essential business” working within the energy industry, we hope all of our industry partners use our example to implement the proper safeguards on your job sites.

### MANUFACTURING PLANT MEASURES

In a recent interview between SBT’s Kevin Martin, Vice President of Marketing, and Adam Mayse, Executive Vice President of Operations, the two discussed the steps taken by SBT’s manufacturing division, Integrated Advanced Controls, to mitigate COVID-19 risks and foster a healthy work environment. ([You can hear the full interview here.](#))

*“To ensure the safety of our team members, we have instituted new policies and procedures within our manufacturing facility toward the prevention of the COVID-19 virus. These mitigation efforts not only follow the recommended guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention but go beyond to ensure the wellbeing and safety of not just our employees, but their families as well.” – Adam Mayse, EVP Operations, SBT Alliance.*

### ***1. Consolidated Campus Entrance and Exit***

The factory campus has consolidated all traffic to a single entrance where employees entering and leaving must check in with security personnel who apply CDC recommended alcohol-cleaning solution to their hands, provide them with a face covering, and take their temperature. These are the required steps for all entries to the factory campus.



### ***2. Reconfigured Floor Layout and Operations***

All doorways remain open within the facility to prevent the use of doorknobs or handles.

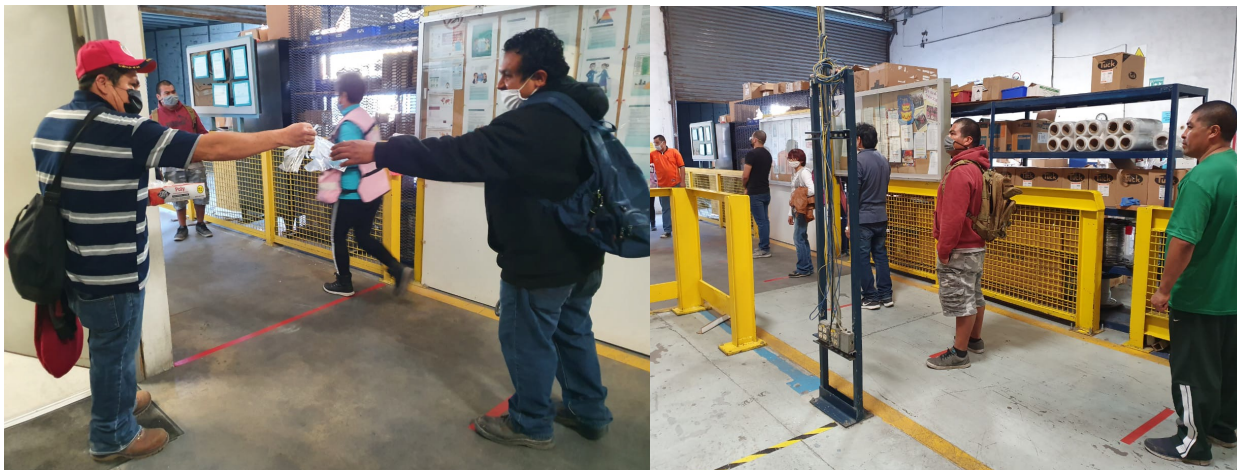


Every three hours, the facility’s custodial staff pass through all common areas and apply CDC-recommended cleaning solution of Water/Bleach (at 8% solution) and wipe down surfaces.

All manufacturing lines have been reconfigured from our standard cellular (U-shaped) configuration to a linear configuration in order to increase the distance between line workers.



Floor markers indicate the required distance each employee must maintain from one another throughout the facility.



Most of our employees either use the bus or taxi to get to the plant. For those who must take public transport, they are sent home with disposable gloves.

### ADDITIONAL MEASURES

In addition to the above measures, IAC's manufacturing facility has also instituted the following procedures to enhance mitigation to COVID-19 further:

Employee work shifts have been staggered into 3 groups across two shifts.

Cafeteria remains open, but now all breaks are staggered with a limit of 6 employees at one time and 2 individuals per table.

Facility staff interview employees daily to ensure safety of home conditions and identify any possible symptomatic family members.

### KEEPING SAFE WHILE STAYING OPERATIONAL

In closing, SBT Alliance implores all our industry partners and end-user clients heed the guidance and recommendations provided by the CDC, OSHA, and various other federal, state, and local health agencies. As we continue to monitor and implement COVID-19 mitigation strategies to ensure our employees, staff, and clients remain safe, we will be sure to continue to share our experiences and best practices.

For a list of additional guidance, please visit the following recourses:

- [U.S. State Epidemiologists](#)
- [Directory of Local Health Departments](#)
- [OSHA Guidance for Employers](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

Additionally, if you'd like to learn more about the steps SBT Alliance's manufacturing division, Integrated Advanced Controls, has taken, you can hear the full interview with SBT's EVP of Operations, Adam Mayse. and Kevin Martin, VP of Marketing, here:

### [COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies from a Manufacturer's Perspective](#)