



Business Continuity Planning for Public Health Emergencies

In the event of a disease outbreak or pandemic, such as seasonal influenza or COVID-19, businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Planning is critical to your business and our community. The following checklist identifies important activities businesses can do now to prepare, many of which will also help you in other emergencies.

PLAN FOR THE IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS.

- Identify essential business functions, essential jobs or roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted. Cross-train staff to perform your identified essential functions.
- Develop and plan for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your products and/or services (e.g. effect of restriction on mass gatherings, need for hygiene supplies).
- Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (including suppliers and customers) and identifying secondary or back-up contacts.

PLAN FOR THE IMPACT ON YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS.

- Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick and seek medical care if needed.
- Allow for employee absences due to factors such as family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures.
- Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen. Poster can be found at the following hyperlinks: [Slow the Spread of Germs](#), [Don't Spread Germs at Work](#), [Wash Your Hands](#)
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly by knowing where to find up-to-date, reliable information.

ESTABLISH POLICIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

- Establish policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a communicable disease outbreak (e.g. non-punitive, extended leave), including policies on when a previously ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness.

- Establish policies to minimize exposure between employees and also between employees and the public, if public health officials call for social distancing. Consider:
 - Flexible worksites (e.g. telecommuting),
 - Flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts),
 - Modifying the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees and between employees and customers (refer to CDC recommendations).
- Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating these policies.
- Plan for the cancellation of non-essential business travel and stay informed about travel restrictions and alerts issued by the CDC at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS.

- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal) in all business locations.
- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- Enhance communications and information technology infrastructures as needed to support employee telecommuting and remote customer access.