CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS

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ICC INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The world business organization

The coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak is a global health emergency that requires effective action by governments, individuals and businesses.

All businesses have a key role to play in minimising the likelihood of transmission. Early, bold and effective action will reduce short-term risks to employees and long-term costs to businesses and the economy. Prevention is both easier and more cost-effective for an exponentially growing process.

While specific actions each business should take will depend on location, the nature of the workplace and the potential disruptiveness to operations, ICC encourages all businesses to take appropriate actions to get ahead of the outbreak.

Right now, businesses should be developing business continuity plans (where there are no reported cases), readying business continuity plans (where there have been sporadic cases of imported or locally acquired cases) or implementing business continuity plans (where there is local transmission or a large number of cases).

To assist the development of such plans, ICC has partnered with the New England Complex Systems Institute to develop this summary of actions businesses can take to reduce risks to everyone associated with a business (employees, customers and partners) and the business itself.

General

- Promote understanding among employees and their families of coronavirus transmission and prevention by directing them to the WHO and national health authority websites.
- Develop customised organisation policies to reduce transmission and arrange for meticulous implementation.
- Ensure employees know that when they have even mild symptoms they should not be at work locations or in-person meetings and they will not be penalised for sick days.
- Set up a reporting system for any cases.
- Keep a clear log of each day's contacts. If an infection is identified, the business can alert all possibly exposed to minimise risk and mitigate harm to employees and customers.
- Ensure employees have appropriate health insurance policies so that they will not be afraid to seek out care when they have symptoms, even mild ones.
- Engage with local medical facilities to coordinate early rapid testing of employees for coronavirus.
- Prepare essentials (hand sanitiser, alcohol, masks, Infrared contactless forehead thermometers) in case the conditions deteriorate and employees don't have access to those items.

Meetings, Travel And Visitors

- Replace in-person meetings with virtual.
- Arrange for employees to work from home where possible.
- Restrict travel to higher risk zones. Travel to very high risk zones—China, Iran, the northern regions of Lombardy and Veneto in Italy, South Korea and Thailand (as of 6 March)—should be strongly discouraged.
- Set a clear policy prohibiting all work-related travel deemed non-essential.
- Change ways of doing business to make seemingly essential travel unnecessary.
- Limit visitors and set policies to inquire and rule out visitors based upon their residential zone status and business coronavirus prevention policies. Check visitor symptoms upon arrival.

Workplaces

- Promote flexible work hours, staggered hours, and shifts to decrease density in the workplace.
- Employers should ask employees returning from places with confirmed cases, or having uncertain contacts during travel, to self-quarantine for 14 days before coming to the office. Employers should keep close track of their health condition, and report and seek medical care.
- Employers should have thermometers on hand. If an employee has a fever (37.3 Celcius or 99.1 Fahrenheit or above), they should immediately be given a mask and sent home.
- Employees whose work involves unavoidable proximity with others should be given masks.
- Reroute traffic into the building to promote hand washing on entry and place hand sanitiser in multiple locations to facilitate use.
- Arrange employees to avoid clustering in elevators. Elevators should not take more than half of their carrying capacity.
- Working space should be rearranged to ensure maximum distance between employees.
- Disinfect public areas, locales with heavy traffic and surfaces frequently touched.
- If A/C must be used, disable re-circulation of internal air. Weekly clean/disinfect/replace key components and filers.
- Scatter dining, keep 3 feet of distance while dining and avoid sitting face-to-face. Separate utensils and frequently disinfect.
- Cafeteria staff must be frequently checked for health with a daily temperature check. On entry, staff should be asked five questions about their health (fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhoea, vomiting).
- In highly affected areas, promote meal delivery rather than going out for meals. Arrange help for calls for food delivery and a location for contactless drop off and pickup of food in a hygienic area without lines.
- Consider how employees get to work locations and develop recommendations including avoiding public transportation, or careful hygiene including avoiding touching surfaces, hand washing and wearing masks in areas of increased risk.
- The responsibilities of ensuring workplace policies on coronavirus safety should be clear and accountable, with designated points of contact.

Retail and Hospitality – considerations

- High contact industries may be severely disrupted. Early and effective interventions may mitigate but will not eliminate the risk unless they are society-wide.
- The importance of making sure individuals with even mild cold symptoms from work involving contact with others cannot be overemphasised.
- Keep a clear log of each day's contacts. So that if an infection is identified the business can alarm all possibly exposed to minimise risk and mitigate harm to employees and customers.
- Non-contact methods for doing business should be developed and implemented including: walk up window pick up and drop off service (including adequate spacing in lines), drive by service, and no-contact home delivery.

Chen Shen and Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Guidelines for coronavirus in business settings*, NECSI (March 2, 2020).

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC)

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