

Healthy Habits

No matter what your business decides to do during a pandemic, remember that good personal hygiene is the key to protecting you and your employees from getting sick.

1. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least once a day.
 - Copy machines
 - Counter tops
 - Phone handsets
 - Keyboards
 - Doorknobs
2. Stock up on hand sanitizers and hand soap.
 - Alcohol based hand wipes for office use and after hand washing. 
 - Soap for employee and public restrooms.
3. Encourage your employees to wash their hands frequently.
4. Encourage your employees to stay home if they are feeling sick.
5. Establish non-punitive absence policies during a pandemic so that your employees will stay home if they are ill and not spread the disease to co-workers and/or customers.
6. Encourage your employees to sneeze and cough into their shirt sleeves or tissue and not their hands.
7. Consider eliminating handshaking among employees.

Helpful Websites

TVF&R business pandemic influenza preparedness information: www.tvfr.com/safetytips/emerg_prep/flu.aspx/

US federal government website: www.flu.gov/

US Department of Health and Human Services Pandemic Preparedness Plan: <http://www.flu.gov/planning-preparedness/business/index.html#>

World Health Organization (WHO): <http://www.who.int/influenza/en/>

CDC – Stopping the Germ at Home, Work and School: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm

Pandemic Influenza



How To Ensure Business Continuity

Possible Scenarios

1. During a flu pandemic, many employees may not be able to report to work due to a variety of reasons:
 - Sickness
 - Staying home to take care of ill family members
 - Staying home to look after children if schools are closed
 - Fear and anxiety
 - Lack of transportation if the public transportation system shuts down
2. A sudden and prolonged reduction in work-force numbers during a pandemic will require that your business prioritize services in order to keep essential operations functioning.
3. During a flu pandemic, public health authorities may ask businesses and other organizations to stop holding large gatherings in order to minimize the spread of disease.
 - You may not be able to hold large business meetings/conferences.
 - You may need to reduce the number of employees working together in the same office.
 - You may not be able to serve large numbers of customers in the same location.
4. Businesses supplying daily necessities and those that are depended upon for community stability need to plan to keep operating even when others are shut down. Examples include:
 - Banks
 - Grocery Stores
 - Pharmacies
 - Hospitals
 - Supplies Delivery
 - Gas Stations

Possible Solutions

1. Temporarily suspend non-essential business operations and keep only essential operations running.
2. Consider having only pre-identified and/or essential personnel work during a pandemic to minimize the spread of disease.
3. Cross train employees for multiple job functions so that essential business operations can continue during periods of staff shortage.
4. Employees who have returned to work after fully recovering from pandemic flu will have immunity and can be allowed to work in high risk environments (environments where there are high frequencies of person-to-person contact).
5. Consider having employees telecommute from home.
 - Can your employees access your company's computer network from home?
 - Do employees have the know-how and the hardware to telecommute?
 - Have you considered network security issues?
 - Provide training and make sure your employees are well prepared to work away from the office during an emergency.
6. Hold teleconferences and/or video conferences instead of actual meetings.
7. Consider staggering employees' work shifts to minimize the spread of disease.
8. Consider having employees work shorter shifts so they can spend more time with their families.

9. Set up healthy work environment policies to protect your employees and customers from getting sick.
 - Promote frequent hand washing among employees.
 - Encourage employees to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue or shirt sleeve and not use their hands.
 - Encourage employees not to touch their mouths, nose or eyes with dirty hands.
 - Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick.
 - Disinfect commonly used surfaces (phone handsets, counter tops, copy machines etc.) at least once a day.
 - Wear protective personal equipment such as disposable gloves and face masks if necessary.
10. Set up emergency communication protocols.
 - Do you know how to contact your employees should your business be closed during a pandemic?
 - If an employee becomes ill at work, are you prepared to contact his/her family members?
 - Are you prepared to give and receive information from your local public health authorities during a pandemic? Public health authorities could be issuing voluntary and/or mandatory infection control procedures.
 - Consider setting up an emergency call down procedure to distribute timely and accurate information to your employees during a pandemic.
11. Set up non-punitive sick leave and absence policies for use in a pandemic situation.