



## WHY ACT?

Small businesses can play a major role in combatting the spread of Coronavirus and other infectious diseases. Adopting good practices early will help protect employees, customers and local communities—and ultimately make businesses more resilient during this difficult period. These simple guidelines provide practical advice for local business leaders who are ready to step up to the challenge.

### KNOW THE SIGNS

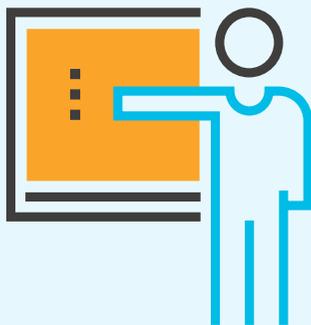
#### Symptoms of Coronavirus

According to the World Health Organization, the **most common symptoms** of COVID-19 are:

- > Fever
- > Tiredness
- > Dry Cough

These **less common symptoms** are usually mild and develop gradually:

- > Aches and Pains
- > Nasal Congestion
- > Runny Nose
- > Sore Throat
- > Diarrhea



### KNOW THE RISKS

Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment, but around 1 out of every 6 people becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing.

**Older people** and those with **underlying medical problems** like high blood pressure, heart problems, or diabetes **are more likely to develop serious illness.**

**People with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing should seek immediate medical attention.**

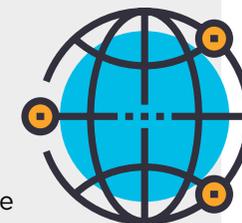
### STOP THE SPREAD

#### Workplaces

1. **Clean workspaces and shared items** (door handles, copy machines/printers, breakrooms, remotes, light switches) three times daily.
2. **Place sanitizer** at entryways and provide employees with disinfecting wipes.
3. **Reinforce handwashing procedures** and other methods to limit virus exposure.
4. **Implement sanitizing procedures** multiple times a shift in high traffic areas, such as retail and restaurant environments.
5. **Reduce office capacity** by implementing staggered arrival, departure, and break times.
6. **Modify workstations or stagger hours** to increase space between staff, guests, and clients.
7. **Schedule video or phone calls** instead of face to face meetings.
8. **Ask delivery drivers to call upon arrival** and/or leave items outside the office instead of entering the lobby or reception area.
9. **Place signs on entrances** requesting that sick guests do not enter the building.
10. **Practice social distancing** by maintaining a 1 meter distance between staff and visitors.
11. **Use alternate greetings** such as waving or bowing.

#### Travel

1. **Consult national travel advice** before scheduling trips and advise staff to do the same.
2. **Advise employees** who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment that they should notify their supervisor and call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
3. **Encourage employees** to share details about any upcoming travel plans.
4. **Implement remote working** arrangements when possible to reduce commutes.



# OPTIMIZE YOUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS

While responding to a public health crisis is never easy, it provides an opportunity to stress test your operations and identify inefficiencies. Taking time to reevaluate your strategy, human resources policies, and communications plans can help to overcome short-term difficulties and future proof your business.

## 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Am I up to date on the latest guidance from local authorities?
2. Are my employees informed about our latest operating procedures?
3. Is there a contingency plan in place in case of temporary closure?
4. Have I updated my suppliers and contractors about operational changes?
5. Do I have additional capacity to support my local community?



## STRATEGY

1. **Create a business continuity plan** to ensure that the business can keep running in the event of stricter guidance.
2. **Nominate a response team** to stay apprised of advisories from local authorities and revise your operations accordingly.
3. **Assign clear responsibilities** to staff members and implement a reporting method to maintain accountability.
4. **Take advantage of off-peak hours** by redoubling cleaning and organization efforts.
5. **Contact suppliers and contractors** to advise them of changes in procedures.
6. **Adopt a flexible and opportunistic approach** to adapting or transitioning business practices to respond to new challenges that arise.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

1. **Review human resources policies**, workplace, leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits plans and advise staff of any changes.
2. **Evaluate technical capabilities** and address gaps to support remote work if/when possible.
3. **Empower staff members** to stay home from work in appropriate situations.
4. **Nominate a point of contact** to track staff physical and mental health through regular check-ins.
5. **Use sensitivity** when responding to absences due to childcare disruption or family illness.
6. **Develop plans** to support staff who need additional resources to complete their work and provide flexibility for short-term productivity losses.
7. **Provide transparency** on numbers of affected staff members while maintaining staff privacy.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

1. **Update staff contact lists** and institute regular updates by e-mail and phone.
2. **Create a mechanism** to safely address staff questions and concerns.
3. **Minimize feelings of isolation and loneliness** for remote workers by holding regular bilateral, team, and client calls.
4. **Leverage social media channels** to share advisories from government agencies and updates about business operations.
5. **Share best practices** with other businesses in your community (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce and associations to improve community response efforts.
6. **Maintain close relationships** with the community by addressing client concerns in a timely manner and developing innovative methods to engage target audience.
7. **Consider charitable giving** to help less fortunate members of the community—either through financial contributions or by donating unused supplies (toilet paper, soap) from workspaces that are closed.

