**COMPANY NAME**

**Viral Pandemic Disease Preparedness Plan**

This viral pandemic disease preparedness plan has been developed to ensure continuity in our enter types of services here in the event of a pandemic and to protect the health and safety of organization’s employees. Recommendations from the Center for Disease Control have been incorporated into this plan.

Planning for a Pandemic or other highly infectious respiratory disease is different from preparations for a time-specific incident such as an earthquake, fire, flood or terrorist attack. This is because there is no definitive beginning and end; significant potential exists for rapid increases in illness and death in all age groups, even among the healthy population; it will encompass a much larger geographical area; and there is no damage to physical infrastructure.

**The 6 Phases of a Pandemic**

W.H.O has retained the use of a six-phased approach for easy incorporation of recommendations and approaches into existing preparedness and response plans. The description of pandemic phases have been revised to make them easier to understand, more precise, and based upon observable phenomena. Phases 1-3 correlate with preparedness, including development of response planning activities, while Phases 4-6 clearly signal the need for response and mitigation efforts.



Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK143061/>

**RESPONSE PLAN**

In correlation with the above referenced graphic, our response plan provides three phases of infection control:

[Response Plan Phase 1. Infection Control and Employee Protection](#_la6bysvfw981)

[Leadership Communication](#_xnb2nkzd3mln)

[Points of Discussion for Managing the Potential Business Impact](#_rjl1uadgy9sk)

[Hygiene Precautions](#_n7c3p37h48ut)

[Social Distancing Precautions](#_gymaqgn2ufd)

[Disinfection Procedures (According to the CDC)](#_pccmkzktd0po)

[Travel](#_teu99snf7p9t)

[Preparing the Workforce to Move to Working from Home](#_99hgczkigjux)

[Voluntary Remote Work](#_g877kuwrl8tt)

[Response Plan Phase 2. Additional Infection Control and Employee Protection](#_27xnadnisqk)

[Leadership Communication](#_er9wga77worp)

[Work Remote Protocols](#_1w8lpob8vw7s)

[Ensuring Collaboration While Working from Home](#_1yj7f2fmr9hf)

[Phase 3. Managing Absenteeism and Remote Work](#_s1q40c7wi509)

[Protocols for Employees Who Become Ill](#_srvgkjzemid0)

[Ensuring Completion of Mission Critical Tasks](#_iurzbkdgdelp)

[Resources](#_8gv5btd2igtr)

# Response Plan Phase 1. Infection Control and Employee Protection

Safeguarding the health of employees and customers during a viral pandemic is a key objective for this organization. A variety of infection control measures, including heightened hygiene practices, social distancing, and disinfection procedures may be utilized to slow the spread of disease. One of the best strategies to reduce the risk of becoming ill with viral pandemic is to avoid crowded settings and other situations that increase the risk of exposure to someone who may be infected.

## Leadership Communication

Leadership will set the tone in these types of circumstances, and it’s important to set the right one. Panicked leadership means uneasy employees. You’ll need to remain transparent while also communicating strategically, to avoid spooking employees. It’s important to share:

* Any information you have regarding the pandemic and how it affects the organization
* How your organization will be navigating the pandemic should the situation escalate
* What actions the organization will take to physically protect employees, clients, and the community
* Resources available to employees such as paid sick leave, FMLA, etc.

## Points of Discussion for Managing the Potential Business Impact

The leadership team should meet in the early stages of a pandemic to discuss and prepare for the potential impact the pandemic will have on the business. Points of discussion include:

* Main risks and scenarios for the business, current and upcoming projects, and clients
* Main risks and scenarios for the finances, including within next 30, 60, 90 days, and into the future
* Communication strategy for employees, clients and the community
* Collection of customer insights and status of their wellbeing, and how to stay top of mind
* Policies regarding refunds, contract changes, etc, in light of pandemic
* Suppliers, partners and others within the chain
* Contractual risks
* Access to key vendors and subcontractors to maintain your services
* Evaluation and optimization of cash flow, expenses, investments, etc
* Creditor/suppliers agreements
* Tax incentives
* Maintaining business growth through sales - what opportunities are presented in an economic dip?
* Marketing plan for building good will in the community
* Barriers to growth that can be solved in long and short term

## Hygiene Precautions

* Stay home if you are sick.
* Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
* Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.
* Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve (avoid sneezing or coughing into the hands).
* Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.
* Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. • If wearing gloves, wash your hands after removing them.
* Keep frequently touched common surfaces (for example, telephones, computer equipment, etc.) clean.
* Use hand sanitizer after handling mail, and after each customer transaction.
* Additional hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and tissues have been placed in commonly used areas.
* Customer hand sanitizing stations have been placed by front door and at customer service counters. Tissues and CDC educational posters have been posted at various locations in the district offices.
* Follow Disinfection Procedures in Section 2.

## Social Distancing Precautions

* Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with coworkers and customers.
* Avoid shaking hands, the high-five, and the knuckle bump as this can still spread germs. If you do have physical contact with others, always wash your hands immediately afterward.
* When possible, try not to use other employee’s phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment.
* Minimize group meetings; use e-mails, and phones when possible. If meetings are unavoidable, avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with others and ensure that the meeting room is well ventilated.
* Remove magazines and other frequently touched materials from common areas.
* During times of moderate to severe levels of illness, telephone communications is the preferred method of contact.

## Disinfection Procedures (According to the CDC)

*Timing and Location*

For facilities that do not house people overnight (i.e. schools, daycare centers, office, etc.)

* Close off areas used by any ill persons and wait as long as practical to begin cleaning and disinfection to minimize exposure.
* Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation
* If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning disinfection
* Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons

For facilities that house people overnight (i.e. senior homes, universities, etc.)

* Follow interim guide for [US Institutions of Higher Education](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html)
* Follow same instructions as stated above for facilities that do not house people overnight
* If there will be ill persons onsite, in isolation, follow [Interim Guidance for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection for U.S. Household with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html)
* Focus on cleaning and disinfecting common areas where staff/others providing services may come into contact with ill persons, but reduce cleaning and disinfection of bedrooms/bathrooms used by ill persons as needed.
* Continue routine cleaning in areas where the ill persons have visited or used

*Surfaces*

* Dirty surfaces should be spot cleaned with soap and water before disinfection
* For disinfection, use diluted household bleach solutions with at least 70% alcohol

*Clothing and Linens*

* To minimize spreading of the virus, refrain from shaking clothing
* Use the warmest water setting as possible according to manufacturer instructions and let the items dry completely
* Clean and disinfect areas that came in contact with the items such as hampers, carts, etc.

*Personal Hygiene*

Cleaning staff should:

* wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash
* Use additional PPE required depending on the task (e.g. if their is risk of splash)
* Remove their gloves after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons
* Immediately report breaches in PPE

Everyone should:

* Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, often. If soap and water are unavailable and hands aren’t visibly soiled, they can use a alcohol-based hand sanitizer
* Follow normal preventative actions such as avoiding touching eyes, mouth, or nose with unwashed hands
* Wash hands
	+ After blowing one’s nose, coughing or sneezing
	+ After using the restroom
	+ Before eating or preparing food
	+ After contact with animals or pets
	+ Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child)

## Travel

Employees are encouraged to avoid travel, but travel is not prohibited. Employees who travel may be required to work from home for 14 days in order to ensure the safety of our workforce, particularly if they demonstrate symptoms of the virus.

Non-essential business travel will be cancelled.

## Preparing the Workforce to Move to Working from Home

In order to prepare for the possibility of mandatory work from home, the following must occur:

* Confirm with each employee that they have the ability and set up to work from home
* Determine if they will use their own devices, for which we will offer a reimbursement, or if we will provide laptops.
* Provide training on virtual communication methods (E.g. Zoom) to those who need it
* Set ground rules within teams for working remote around communication, availability, expectations, respect, etc.
* Determine if they will need to reschedule client meetings or move them to a virtual venue

## Voluntary Remote Work

To assist with social distancing, we may offer the following positions the opportunity to work from home.

Positions that may work remotely include:

* Finance
* Marketing
* Human resources
* X
* Y
* Z

Positions that may work remote on a rotating basis while practicing social distancing at the office include:

* Customer service
* X
* Y
* Z

Mission critical positions who perform work that cannot be done remotely include:

* Janitorial
* X
* Y
* Z

# Response Plan Phase 2. Additional Infection Control and Employee Protection

During this phase, jobs that can be remote should be done off site and visitors will not be allowed on the premises. Only those who perform mission critical functions will be allowed onsite, but all steps will be taken to ensure everyone can work from home.

## Leadership Communication

Again, it is vital that leadership communicate calmly and confidently. In each stage, employee panic will increase, and it’s leadership’s job to put them at ease. Leadership should be sharing:

* How their actions will protect employees, clients, and the community
* What employees can do to prevent the virus from spreading
* Resources available to employees such as paid sick leave, FMLA, etc. \*Keep and mind that these may change quickly as government passes new legislation
* How the work environment will be changing to accommodate absent employees, remote work, employee layoffs, etc.
* What the organization will be doing to maintain company culture and ensure a positive work environment during rapidly changing circumstances

## Work Remote Protocols

* Conduct meetings via web-conferencing
* Cancel all travel
* Meet with your manager daily
* Create expectations around workload
* Offer flex-time to accommodate working parents
* Initiate BYOD reimbursement, if applicable
* Create an open channel for employees to connect

## Ensuring Collaboration While Working from Home

Each manager should meet with their employees daily via web conferencing, in order to discuss:

* Clear objectives and tasks
* Key performance indicators while working from home
* Expectations and accountability
* Personal plans for child care, working from home, caring for family members, etc
* Should there be an increase in downtime, what projects and improvements were on the shelf that can be focused on now

# Phase 3. Managing Absenteeism and Remote Work

## Protocols for Employees Who Become Ill

Rates of absenteeism depends on the severity of the pandemic. In a severe pandemic, absenteeism attributable to illness or the need to care of family members may reach 40% during the peak of the outbreak.

*Protocol for Sick Employee*

An employee staying home when sick is the best way they can play a role in stopping the spread of the virus. During an infectious disease outbreak it is critical employees do not report to work while ill and or experiencing the following symptoms: mild to severe respiratory issues, fever, cough and shortness of breath. Employees who report to work ill should be sent home.

An employee experiencing the symptoms above should:

1. Contact their physician. Employee health is priority number one. [Here are some steps](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html) for employees to take if they are sick, according to the CDC.
2. Let their manager know immediately, as they will have their own protocols.
3. Stay home and get better. If they are unable to get tested for the virus, they must stay home until all the symptoms resolve or until they can get tested and test negative. See below for return to work guidelines.
4. Contact HR to discuss paid sick leave opportunities.

*Doctor’s Note Policy*

Usually, if an employee is out sick or show symptoms of being ill, it may become necessary to request information from them and/or their health care provider. Given that COVID-19 has overwhelmed healthcare organizations, it’s recommended that organizations do not require doctors notes stating inability to work or ability to return to work.

*Confidentiality of Medical Information*

Treat any medical information as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of medical information is in limited circumstances with supervisors, managers, first aid and safety personnel, and government officials as required by law.

*Return to Work Guidelines*

According to the CDC there are three circumstances in which it is safe for employees to return to work:

1. **Time-since-illness-onset/time-since-recovery.** Employees can return from home isolation if:
	1. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since symptoms have subsided. This timer starts after the symptoms, such as fever, have subsided for 24 hours without the use of medication; and
	2. At least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
2. **Test-based.** Employees can return from isolation if they test negative for COVID-19. If the employee has previously tested positive, they can return if:
	1. The fever is resolved without the use of medication;
	2. Other symptoms such as respiratory problems have improved; and
	3. The person is re-tested according to FDA regulations
3. **Test-based, no symptoms.** Employees with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, who do not experience symptoms may come back to work seven days after their first positive test.

*Manager Protocol If an Employee Reports Being Sick*

Employees have been instructed to contact managers immediately, should they get sick. While sickness does not necessarily equate to having COVID-19, certain precautions must be taken.

Should an employee become ill, managers should be expected to:

1. Stay calm in order to prevent panic among the workforce. Keep the situation as confidential as possible.
2. Put the employee’s health above all. Encourage them to see a physician and ask them to get tested. Legally, managers can inquire about their symptoms. You can use this chart to help distinguish between COVID-19, the seasonal flu, or a common cold.
3. Treat the situation as though they have tested positive for COVID-19, until confirmed otherwise. Steps include:
	1. Requiring the employee to stay home until they can confirm COVID-19 was not the reason for being sick.
	2. Asking the individual to identify all individuals who they worked 3-6 feet of, in the last 14-days. Anyone identified should be sent home and required to work remote for a 14-day period to ensure the infection does not spread.
	3. Keeping things on the “down-low”. When sending employees home, managers should not identify the individual who is sick, or they could risk a violation of confidentiality laws – not to mention isolate employees even more
	4. If the ill employee has not tested positive yet for COVID-19, share that with the employees being sent home.
	5. Notifying building management that someone in the office could be infected so they can take proper precautions.
	6. Taking additional disinfecting precautions. Disinfecting recommendations from the CDC can be found [here at this link.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)
	7. If the employee has come into direct contact with any clients, communicate to them about the potential case.
4. Tell the ill employee to contact HR with any questions around sick leave and/or FMLA.

## Ensuring Completion of Mission Critical Tasks

We have identified the personnel responsible for performing critical tasks and enough temporary alternates to ensure that each critical task is given appropriate priority during a reduction in normal staffing levels. Personnel will be directed by leadership to ensure the most pressing priorities are managed. In addition, regulatory requirements may be impacted by a reduction in staffing levels.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Position/Department** | **Critical Job Functions** |
| CEO | * Communication with employees and clients
* Managing vision and strategy for business survival through pandemic
* Directing financial decisions
* ?
* ?
 |
| Finance | * Payroll
* Accounts receivable
* Accounts payable
* ?
 |
| Customer service | * Fielding customer calls
* Managing accounts
* ?
 |
| Human resources | * Manage and communicate about employee benefits
* Processing, tracking and reporting illness
* Just in time training for remote work
* In coordination with CEO, develop and manage protocols for remote work, managing the pandemic
* ?
 |
| ? | ? |
| ? | ? |

The following steps will be taken to ensure adequate personnel levels are maintained to perform critical job functions:

* Additional personnel have been trained to X, Y, Z
* Phone lines are forwarded to X

# Resources

* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>
* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
* <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/index.htmlexternal%20icon>
* <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>