

PLANNING FOR CORONAVIRUS





A guide for businesses and organizations






Several countries across the world are experiencing expanding outbreaks of respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a novel coronavirus (SARS CoV-2). The virus is spreading from person-to-person and the number of cases detected in BC, Canada and many other countries is growing. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic making it the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus.




The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is deeply concerned about the impacts this will have not only on individuals, but also local, Indigenous and regional communities. The impact on businesses and the employees should be an important consideration and as such we are doing our best to provide updated information as it comes available.




The following information is taken from various sources and BCEDA recommends that everyone should source out additional information on a regular basis.

INITIATE	
<p style="text-align: center;">IDENTIFY PLAN OBJECTIVES</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>	<p>A well-designed plan can protect your employees and keep your business functioning during a disease outbreak.</p> <p>Objectives might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the spread of disease among staff. • Protect people at higher risk for complications. • Maintain business operations. • Minimize impact on your customers and business partners. <p>Local governments should also consider the possibilities in disruptions in permitting, issuing business licenses, mailing tax invoices, utility management, etc.</p>

<p>OUTLINE KEY BUSINESS FUNCTION</p> 	<p>Determine what people and resources are required for your business to operate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What jobs are needed to carry on day-to-day activities? • Who are your key partners, suppliers, and contractors? • What raw materials does your business need to function? • Where can I find additional staff if my current staff are unable to come to work? • How can you accomplish critical tasks if key partners are unavailable? • How can you adapt if your supply chain is interrupted? <p>Local governments should consider who will manage utilities if employees are unable to come to work?</p>
<p>ASSESS WORKPLACE EXPOSURE RISK</p> 	<p>Identify health risks your employees may face.</p> <p>In the course of their duties, are employees likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have face-to-face contact with large numbers of people? • Spend time in work sites, like health care settings, where they may come into contact with ill people? • Handle materials that could be contaminated, like laboratory samples or healthcare waste? <p>Workers with increased risk include those involved in healthcare, airline operations, waste management. and travel to areas where the virus is spreading.</p> <p>Visit the OSHA website for guidance on controlling exposures among workers at risk: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/ (Note – when BCEDA finds a Canadian alternative to this site it will be posted).</p>
<p>REVIEW WORKPLACE POLICIES</p> 	<p>Ensure your policies are responsive and adaptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify that your human resources policies align with workplace laws. • Implement flexible workplace and leave policies. Providing protected sick leave can limit the spread of disease in your workplace. • During an outbreak, adjust workplace policies to reflect public health recommendations.
<p>IMPLEMENT</p>	
<p>APPLY INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES</p> 	<p>Create a culture of wellness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in high visibility locations. • Provide soap, water, and alcohol-based hand rubs in multiple locations and routinely refill. • Instruct employees to clean hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or by washing for at least 20 seconds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply tissues and no-touch waste bins. • Ask employees to stay home when sick. Ensure that sick leave policies are in place. • Routinely clean commonly touched surfaces.
<p>PREPARE FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING</p> 	<p>Social distancing is an intervention to increase the physical distance between people and reduce the spread of disease. If recommended, consider what policies and procedures your business can implement to accomplish work remotely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow telecommuting where possible. • Permit flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts). • Ensure that you have the technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees working from home. • Trial telecommuting and flexible hours during normal (non-pandemic) periods. Identify and remedy problems that arise.
<p>PLAN TO SEPARATE SICK EMPLOYEES</p> 	<p>Employees who report having a fever or an acute respiratory illness upon arrival to work or who become sick during the workday should be separated from others and immediately sent home. Ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All managers and employees are aware of your policies and the expectation that sick employees stay home. • If possible, designate a separate area at your work site where sick employees can temporarily isolate. Use this space for employees who become ill during the workday and are awaiting transportation to their home or to medical care.
<p>ANTICIPATE ABSENTEEISM</p> 	<p>Prepare for employee absences resulting from personal illness, caring for ill family members, and dismissal of early childhood programs and K-12 schools. Be ready to adapt your business practices to maintain critical operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-train employees to carry out essential functions so the workplace can operate when essential staff are out. • Identify alternative suppliers to meet supply chain needs. • Consider prioritizing customers with the greatest needs. • Prepare to temporarily suspend operations if necessary.
<p>PLAN FOR RESTRICTED TRAVEL</p> 	<p>With the increased spread of the disease around the world you may need to cancel non-essential travel.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you accomplish work-related meetings or events remotely? • Consider allowing employees to change vacation dates • How can you support employees who are abroad when travel restrictions are put into place, particularly those who become

	<p>sick? Ensure you have clear policies for obtaining medical care during travel.</p> <p>Prepare to consult Government of Canada travel advisory website for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which employees may travel or use extra caution.</p>
<p>ENCOURAGE PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS</p> 	<p>Your business is only as healthy as your employees. Encourage them to take steps to prepare for staying home if needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store a two-week supply of water and food. • Make sure to have enough prescription drugs at home. • Keep non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. This includes pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold aides, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins. • Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would like to be cared for if they got sick, and what's needed to care for them at home.
<p>INVOLVE</p>	
<p>ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL</p> 	<p>Determine how you will relay information about the outbreak to employees and business partners or in the case of local governments your citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you keep your workforce and partners informed about the outbreak, latest public health recommendations, and your response? How can you support employees and partners experiencing anxiety and fear? • How can you prevent rumors and misinformation from circulating, and respond effectively if they do? <p>Note many local governments may have followed BCEDA's suggestion and have a transition centre already established to deal with the impacts of the forest industry downturn. Local governments should consider how these centres can be used to provide information on the coronavirus and where to go for help.</p>
<p>GET INPUT FROM YOUR WORKFORCE</p> 	<p>Your plan is more likely to be successful if you get buy-in from employees and partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite your employees to help develop and review the plan. If it's not possible to talk with every team member, try sampling a variety of departments in your organization. • Test out your plan to help detect gaps or problems that need attention. • Share your completed plan with employees. Explain what benefits are available to them, including paid time off, flexible scheduling, etc • Share your plan with other businesses in your community.

<p>EDUCATE OTHERS ON THE PLAN</p> 	<p>Do not keep the plan to yourself.</p> <p>A plan can only be implemented if someone is around to implement it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your team together to inform them of the plan and where possible assign responsibilities. • Have plan readily available for employees to review and activate if needed. • Consider the need for someone outside of your business to know of the plan.
<p>DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ACTIVATING YOUR PLAN</p> 	<p>Decide when and how to activate and terminate your plan.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which decision makers in your business should be involved? What event(s) should trigger action? • What procedures should be used to activate or deactivate your plan? How can you efficiently and effectively transfer business knowledge to key employees? • When you deactivate your plan, how can you most effectively reintegrate employees who have been absent?
<p>STAY INFORMED</p> 	<p>Every disaster including a disease outbreak is different, and the intensity of an outbreak can vary from one location to another. Stay alert to recommendations from federal, provincial, and local public health experts, and adapt your plan accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Canada – Public Health • Government of Canada Toll Free Number: 1-833-784-4397 • Government of BC – Health Link BC • Fraser Health Authority: Coronavirus Questions - General Public – Note: All health authorities are working together to keep people informed. • World Health Organization