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## Maintain Healthy Business Operations

In an effort to assist local businesses with their business continuity efforts, the Town of High Level has compiled a list of strategies and suggestions for maintaining healthy business operations during this unprecedented time of social distancing and isolation.

Begin by mapping your essential functions and your role in the community.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home. Encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses (especially within your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve response efforts.

Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from issues related to the pandemic.

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience high absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions to maintain operations.

Establish policies and practices for legally mandated social distancing. Avoid large gatherings and maintain distance (approximately 2 metres) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias).

Strategies businesses could use include:

- Implement flexible worksites (e.g., telework)
- Implement flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Increase physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
- Implement flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)
- Downsize operations
- Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
- Deliver products through curbside pick-up or delivery

Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their COVID-19 response plan based on local conditions.

Employers are encouraged to review the Business Continuity Workbook from Community Futures

<https://www.communityfutures.ca/index.php?q=small-business-toolkit>

## **Maintain a healthy work environment**

Maintaining a healthy work environment is key to reducing the spread of COVID-19 while keeping your business in operation.

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include increasing ventilation rates or increasing the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers, and worksite visitors:

- Limit the use of cash. Encourage no-touch payments and disinfect terminals after each use.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene in high-visibility areas.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands protocols.
- Consider limiting the number of people allowed in retail businesses.
  - Limit one person per 1,000 square feet of retail space, including staff. Business with less than 1,000 square feet of space should limit to one customer and one sales staff.
  - Place staff at entrances to monitor store limit restrictions
  - Be prepared to turn away customers displaying COVID-19 symptoms
  - Do not allow people to congregate outside of doors or in vestibules. Provide spaces or guidelines to enforce social distancing

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common household disinfectants should be effective.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' tools and property.
- Provide disposable wipes so commonly used surfaces can be wiped down by employees before use.
- Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection following suspected contamination.
- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the Health Canada cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

Take care when attending meetings and gatherings:

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary.
- Consider using videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for meetings and gatherings.
- Consider canceling, adjusting, or postponing meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.
- When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.

**For more information, please visit [www.highlevel.ca](http://www.highlevel.ca).**

