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Maintain Healthy Business Operations

Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily 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 and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Talk with business partners about your response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children.

- Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

Establishing policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing has been ordered by the Province of Alberta. Social distancing means avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately two meters) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework)
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions)
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events)

- Downsizing operations
- Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)
- Delivering 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

Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase ventilation rates.
- Increase 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 point of sale terminals after each use.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands protocols for more information.
- Consider limiting the number of people allowed in retail businesses; especially in the sales floor.
 - The Town of High Level recommends a limit of 1 person per 1,000 square feet of retail space, including staff. Business with less than 1,000 square feet of retail space should limit the number of people to 1 customer and 1 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
 - If queuing is necessary 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, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
- 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. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. To disinfect, use products that meet Health Canada’s criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html#tbl1>
- Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility:
- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the Health Canada cleaning and disinfection recommendations. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html>

Take care when attending meetings and gatherings:

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

MNP Resources

MNP has provided information on supports available for business owners.

<https://www.mnp.ca/en/posts/what-you-need-to-know-about-new-support-programs-for-entrepreneurs>

For more information, please visit www.highlevel.ca.

