Preparing for Covid 19 in Workplaces

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How Covid 19 will affect Workplaces and Businesses?

1. **Absenteeism**: illness, sick family, child’s school closure, fear.

2. **Change of patterns of commerce**: people buy more items for infection prevention, less of all else.

3. People may **stockpile**; shop at odd hours; use more home delivery.

4. **Supplies may be interrupted** (shipments/flights).
What can we do to Prepare?

Plan Ahead. Take Basic Precautions...
Panic or Fear will not solve the problem.
Promote hand-washing

- **Encourage regular hand washing** amongst all staff and customers.
  - Put sanitizing **hand rub** dispensers in prominent places around the workplace.
  - Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled.
  - Display **posters/videos** promoting hand-washing.
  - Ensure access to places to wash hands with soap and running water.
- **Why?** Because washing kills the virus on your hands and prevents the spread of COVID-19.
Promote good respiratory hygiene

- Display **posters** promoting respiratory hygiene.
- Ensure that face masks and / or paper tissues are available at your workplaces, for **those who develop a runny nose or cough at work**, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them.
- **Why?** Because good respiratory hygiene prevents the spread of COVID-19.
Ensure workplaces are clean and hygienic

• **Surfaces** (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) need to be **wiped with disinfectant regularly**.

• Why? Because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads.
Take general precautions to protect the community from spread of Covid-19

- Avoid large public gatherings.
- Avoid close contact with others when you or when the other person(s) are sick.
- Seek medical advice early – by phone.
- Wearing masks or gloves when not necessary or by persons not trained in their use may increase risk of infection.
Ask employees to stay home if ill

• If COVID-19 starts spreading in your community anyone with even a mild cough or low grade fever (37.5 C or more) needs to stay at home.
  • Can work from home if mild illness.
  • People need to stay at home even if just mild symptoms.
  • Communicate this via calls/e-mails/posters/videos in your workplaces.
  • Agree to allow this time off to be considered sick leave.
Advise employees to consult National travel advice before going on business trips overseas

• **Before traveling**
  • Provide employees latest information from a **credible source**, such as WHO/CDC/Department of Health.
  • **Assess benefits and risks** related to upcoming travel plans.
  • Avoid sending employees who may be at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. older employees and those with medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart and lung disease).
  • Advice to travel with small bottles (under 100ml) of alcohol-based hand rub. This can facilitate regular hand-cleaning.
While Traveling

• Encourage employees to wash their hands regularly and stay at least one meter away from people who are coughing or sneezing

• Ensure employees contact local health authorities if they are feeling ill while traveling, and comply with their instructions.
When Employees return from travel

- **Return is subject to travel advisory restrictions.**
- Employees who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should **monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days**.
- **If they develop illness**, even a mild cough or low grade fever:
  - **Stay at home and self-isolate.** This means avoiding close contact (1 meter or nearer) with other people, including family members.
  - **Telephone the Department of Health**, giving details of their recent travel and symptoms, and follow advice and instructions given by them. Do **NOT** go directly to a clinic/emergency room.
  - **Inform the workplace**.
Getting your business ready in case COVID-19 arrives in your community

Develop an internal plan of **what to do if someone becomes ill at work** with suspected COVID-19:

• Put the ill person in a room or area where they are **isolated** from others.

• **If a mask is available, ask the sick person to wear one.**

• **Limit number of people who have contact** with the sick person. Ensure anyone entering the room **maintains at least 1 m** from the ill person.

• **Contact local health authorities** for further advice.
Work practices

When there is COVID 19 in your community,
• Where possible, promote **working via telephone or online.**
• **Avoid public transport and crowded places.**
• Develop a **contingency plan** for your business:
  • Plan how to keep your business running even if a significant number of employees, contractors and suppliers cannot come to your place of business - either due to local restrictions on travel or because they are ill.
• **Communicate to your employees** about the plan:
  • Make sure they are aware of **what they need to do – or not do** – under the plan.
  • Emphasize importance of staying away from work if ill (even mild).
• Provide information, support and encouragement for staff.
Work practices

• **Social distancing:**
  - Avoiding large gatherings/meetings.
  - Staggered or non-overlapping work shifts.

• **Downsizing operations:**
  - Stopping non-essential services.
  - Voluntary leave for these staff.

• **Delivering services remotely:**
  - From home – via telephone, e-mail, online.
• Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference.
• Action now will help protect your employees and your business.
• These actions are beneficial for employee health even outside a Covid 19 outbreak, and should be continued indefinitely.
• Together, we can beat Covid 19!
• For further information on Covid 19, contact:
  • 141 Hotline
  • Your local clinic via 4388000
• Thank you.