

Protecting Your Business Against Coronavirus Disruption

Coronavirus is a very common type of virus that can be found in upper respiratory system in humans, mammals and birds. Famous examples of coronavirus include SARS and MERS. The World Health Organization (WHO) has formally named the novel coronavirus "COVID-19."

The current threat erupted in December in China and has made its way across the world and into Canada. It is important to note the Public Health Agency of Canada, the risk level in Canada and for Canadian travellers remains low.

As with any rapidly evolving health situation, there is always uncertainty. Be prepared to respond to the situation as it changes.

PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS

As a business owner, there are steps you can take to respond to the ongoing situation and protect your business. Consider the following:

1. People

- What is happening amongst your staff? Are there any illnesses?
- Review your work-from-home policies and practices.
- Educate your staff on smart health habits (see practices below).

2. Technology

- Are you susceptible to a cyber attack? Spam, phishing and ransomware play on people's fears.
- Phishers may attempt to hook victims for their credentials, under the guise of a legitimate organization and using COVID-19 as bait.

3. Business Operations

- Review your business continuity planning through the lens of an infectious disease. Have you considered a loss of staff?
- Review your business processes – what is time critical?
- Consider the impacts to your vendors and suppliers. How are they impacted?
- How will a loss of a vendor or supplier impact your operations? What if inventory becomes difficult to obtain?
- Review your inventory of personal protective equipment (e.g. hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.)
- How would your business continue to operate if there was a quarantine or if customers were reluctant to visit your place of business? Are you able to continue operating online?

4. Brand and Reputation

- Consider communicating with your employees and customers about any plans you have in place.
- Are your crisis communications ready?



PROTECT YOURSELF

It all starts with protecting yourself by maintaining good hygiene. The following preventative actions can be taken to defend against any virus:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Remember to cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue and then throw away the tissue and wash your hands or use a sanitizer.
- Regularly disinfect your hands, surfaces and objects, such as desks and shared areas.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- If you have flu-like symptoms and / or have recently traveled to an affected region, immediately consult your health care provider, follow their directions and advise your company.
- If you are ill, stay home and let your work know if needed.
- Avoid travel to higher risk areas and impacted regions.
- Get information from credible sources as misinformation can spread quickly.

Review your plans and activate as needed:

- Infectious Disease / Pandemic Plans
- Emergency Response Plan
- Incident Response Plan
- Business Continuity Plan
- Crisis Management Plan
- Crisis Communications Plan

For more information, please contact your local advisor.

Additional Resources:

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/>

Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Tracker: <https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

