COVID-19
PREPAREDNESS TOOLKIT

Overview

As many businesses reopen and bring employees back to resume operations, following all regulations and guidelines is essential to keep stakeholders healthy and safe. COVID-19 preparedness plans that implement protocols to protect employees, customers and the community are crucial.

To assist, here are some communication guidelines and resources to help operate your business safely and responsibly. In addition to these tools, you also should always reference state-mandated regulations.

DEPEND ON TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [OSHA](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

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WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If you would like additional help with your communication efforts, we are here for you. We can create a crisis plan specific to your organization, customized messages to your target audiences, branded signs for your business and many other resources to inform your stakeholders about your efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Click here to fill out a quick form and we will be in touch soon.

COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK

Every business should develop a COVID-19 business preparedness plan that implements protections and protocols to keep employees, clients and the community safe. Each state has its own guidelines for resuming operations and they are typically available online.

It's important to let employees know you are taking rigorous infection prevention and control measures to protect them. You should be as transparent as possible and clearly communicate expectations. Here are some things to include in your communication:

SHARE THE PLAN WITH EMPLOYEES

To show your commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace, share your business preparedness plan so managers and employees know they are accountable for implementing and complying. Ask for cooperation to achieve your company goal of minimizing the potential for spreading COVID-19 throughout the workplace.

If you are implementing a plan in phases, be as clear as possible about what constitutes each phase and provide as much information about the timeline as possible. Provide links to your state's public health guidelines so employees can better understand why you are doing things in a very specific way.

Most importantly, show empathy. Let employees know that you have considered their concerns, home situations and suggestions when creating the plan.

CLEARLY ILLUSTRATE WHAT THE NEW OFFICE EXPERIENCE WILL BE LIKE

Preparedness plans require workplaces to address things like sick employees staying home; physical distancing; hygiene; workplace cleaning, disinfection and ventilation; additional protections for customers or visitors; and employee training. Be sure to clearly explain what each of these areas will look like at your workplace. Common topics include:

- Establishing a protocol for how employees should call in sick

- Health screenings and updated policies to support employees

- Employee safety, including when personal protective equipment is required, hygiene and cleaning their own workspaces

- Activity in the office for conference rooms, elevators and breakrooms

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL FOR WHEN AN EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

The safety of employees must be your top priority. If you have an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, we've included some best practices to follow and some templates for communicating to affected stakeholders.

DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL TO GATHER INFORMATION FROM THE EMPLOYEE WHO IS ILL

- When an employee informs you that he or she has tested positive for COVID-19, be sure to express sympathy and compassion. The employee will most likely be anxious, so make sure he or she knows they have your complete support.

- No matter what, federal law dictates that employee privacy must be maintained.

- Communication should be conducted in a manner the employee finds most comfortable and protects other employees from being exposed. Video conference or over the phone is best, but text or email are acceptable too.

- Information to gather from the employee includes:
  - When they received their positive test result.
  - When they were last at work.
  - Who they were in close contact with (spending 15 minutes within six feet)

- Make sure you maintain communication throughout the employee's recovery and agree on a date for them to return to work.

COMMUNICATE WITH EMPLOYEES, CLIENTS AND ANYONE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19

- Work with human resources and try to initiate conversation via video conference or phone. In the event you are unable to reach them quickly, send an email right away. Even if you can have a one-on-one conversation, follow up with specific instructions in an email.

- Anyone considered a close contact should be sent home to self-isolate for 14 days.

- Instruct the employee to contact their doctor right away if they display COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, fever, tiredness).

- Please remember that the identity of the employee who is sick must be kept confidential.

- Notify the rest of your staff. If possible, communicate via video conference or phone, but follow up with an email.

- If customers will be affected or have been exposed, it's important to communicate with them too. Being transparent about how you are handling the pandemic will build trust because it shows your compassion for your employees and the work they do.

- In the event multiple employees test positive for COVID-19, the media may reach out. It's helpful to have a prepared statement or news release ready to deploy. While not typical, if the situation escalates, you may need to activate a crisis communication plan.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

SIGNAGE

Here are some signs outlining established protocols for employees, visitors and customers. These are easily printable and can be shared throughout your workplace. We are happy to create customized signs to match your organization's brand.

PG 14 Social distancing

PG 15 Do the Five handwashing

PG 16 Occupancy signs for things like conference rooms, elevators

PG 17 Handwashing signs for restrooms and breakrooms

PG 18 How to wear a mask

PG 19 Cover your cough and sneeze signs

PG 20 Health screening questions

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Having solid messaging is essential when navigating a crisis. We can create a content strategy specific to your business to help communicate safety protocols to all stakeholders. We will focus on all your target audiences and can produce any necessary:

- Emails
- Social media posts
- Blogs
- Graphics
- Videos
- Photos

CRISIS PLAN

If you don't already have one, now is the perfect time to create a crisis plan. We will work with you to create a business continuity plan that effectively communicates internally and externally during a crisis situation. We'll conduct research to understand all the dynamics of your unique situation, your audience's perceptions, potential scenarios, triggers and sensitivities, and other factors that affect how a crisis unfolds. Crisis communication plan deliverables may include:

- Expanded trigger list identifying potential crisis situations in addition to a pandemic
- Key audience identification for potential situations
- Guiding philosophies for communicating in a crisis
- Establishing criteria and protocol on if, when and how to react and respond
- Crisis contact process and communication cascade/tree
- Placeholder draft responses for both traditional and social media for two crisis scenarios

EMAIL TEMPLATE: COMMUNICATING YOUR BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS PLAN TO EMPLOYEES

Subject: [Company Name] **Business Preparedness Plan and Safety Training**

Hi all,

In our continued effort to safely and responsibly resume operations, we wanted to share with you our business preparedness plan. We are taking strict health and safety measures to limit the risk of exposure to our employees and visitors to our workplace.

Please carefully read the attached plan, which addresses the following topics:

- Making sure sick employees stay home
- Physical distancing
- Cleaning, disinfecting and ventilation
- Protocol for drop-off, pick-up and delivery
- Protocol for visitors or customers

We are committed to providing you with a safe and healthy workplace. Protecting you from COVID-19 is our priority. We have carefully considered your concerns, home situations and suggestions when building the plan, but if you have any questions or feel we missed something, please reach out. Thank you all for your dedication and understanding.

Sincerely,

[Signature Line]

EMAIL TEMPLATE:
COMMUNICATING REOPENING TO CUSTOMERS

Subject: We're excited to resume operations!

Dear Customer,

[Company name] will safely and responsibly resume operations on [date]. We are following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and our state public health guidelines to keep customers, employees and our community safe.

We are excited to welcome our employees back and ready to continue providing the high-quality [service/products/etc.] you've come to know and expect. We are continuing to execute rigorous sanitary and safety measures to protect the health of all our stakeholders.

[Use this paragraph to explain the steps you are taking in your business preparedness plan]. Employees are required to do a health screening each day before coming to work. Measures have been taken to ensure physical distancing throughout the workplace. Employees also receive training on all new health and safety protocols including hygiene, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning workstations and disinfecting high-touch areas.

We are taking every effort to safely and responsibly reopen our doors. As we get used to our new way of operating, we will keep you informed of any updates as restrictions are lifted.

[Explain where you will post updates.] For continued updates, please visit the newsroom on our website. We also will share updates on social media. Thank you!

We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,

[Signature Line]

Subject: [Company Name] **set to reopen on** [date]

Media Contact:
First and last name
Phone number
Email address

<div align="center">

[Company Name] **set to reopen on** [date]

</div>

CITY, STATE (Month XX, 2020) – [Company name] will safely and responsibly resume operations on [date]. We are following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state public health guidelines to keep customers, employees and our community safe.

"We are excited to reopen our doors, welcoming customers and team members back," [spokesperson first and last name, title,] said. "We are continuing to execute rigorous sanitary and safety measures to protect the health of our stakeholders."

[Use this paragraph to explain the steps you are taking in your business preparedness plan]. Employees are required to do a health screening each day before coming to work. Measures have been taken to ensure physical distancing throughout the workplace. Employees also receive training on all new health and safety protocols including hygiene, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning workstations and disinfecting high-touch areas.

"We are taking every effort to safely and responsibly reopen our doors," [spokesperson last name] said. "As we get used to our new way of operating, we will keep our stakeholders informed of any updates as restrictions are lifted."

[Explain where you will post updates.] For continued updates, please visit the newsroom on our website. We also will share updates on social media.

ABOUT [COMPANY NAME]
Insert your company's boilerplate copy here. If you don't have one, here, a good place to get information is in the "About Us" section of your website. A boilerplate is a brief, factual description that when read, anyone can understand what your company does. Generally, it should be about 100 words long and answer these three questions: 1) Where is your company, and when was it founded? 2) what do you sell? 3) where can people learn more about you?

EMAIL TEMPLATE:
NOTIFY STAFF AN EMPLOYEE HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Subject Line: [Company Name] employee tests positive for COVID-19

Dear [Company Name] staff,

As we continue to navigate the pandemic, keeping our employees healthy and safe is our priority. Unfortunately, one of our own tested positive for COVID-19 on [day, month, date] and is now recovering [at home/in the hospital].

Employees who are considered close contacts have been informed and are self-isolating. If you have not been told you are a close contact, then you are not considered high-risk for being infected. However, if you have concerns or start to display symptoms (dry cough, fever, tiredness), please call your doctor and let us know if you test positive. Your identity will be kept confidential.

[Company Name] is following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state public health guidelines to keep employees safe. [select an option or edit to reflect your current situation]

1. We will temporarily close until [month day] to conduct a thorough sanitation. When we re-open, we will continue keeping you safe with rigorous sanitation efforts, health screening, remote work operations when possible, staggered shifts and physical distancing.

2. We will continue rigorous sanitation efforts, screening procedures, remote work when possible, staggered shift operations and physical distancing practices to keep you safe.

We are here to support you during this difficult time and are so grateful for your dedication so our customers can continue receiving [services/goods/etc]. Remember that if you are unwell, we encourage you to please stay home until you feel healthy again. If you have any questions or need additional resources, please let me know. We are here to help and wish a fast recovery to those affected.

Sincerely,

[Signature Line]

EMAIL TEMPLATE: INFORMING CLOSE CONTACTS OF EMPLOYEE WHO HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Subject Line: [Company Name] **employee tests positive for COVID-19 – Important Action Required**

Dear [insert name of employee],

To continue doing our important work for our customers, the health and safety of employees must be our priority. Unfortunately, one of our own tested positive for COVID-19 on [day, month, date] and is now recovering [at home/in the hospital]. We are reaching out to you because you have been identified as a close contact (a person that has been within six feet of the infected employee for a prolonged period of time).

First, please know we are here to support you. If you are at work, please gather your things and leave as quickly as you can. When you get home, please plan to self-isolate and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, fever, tiredness). Please do not hesitate to call your doctor if you have questions or start to display symptoms.

We are here to support you during this difficult time and are so grateful for your dedication. Please take the time you need to make sure you are safe and healthy. If you have any questions or need additional resources, please let me know. We are here to help.

Sincerely,

[Signature Line]

**MEDIA STATEMENT TEMPLATE
FOR WHEN AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE**

Email Subject Line: [Company Name] **employee tests positive for COVID-19**

As the world continues to navigate the pandemic, we have the very important responsibility of keeping our employees' health and safety our priority. Unfortunately, one of our own tested positive for COVID-19 on [day, month, date] and is now recovering [at home/in the hospital]. Other employees considered close contacts have been informed and are self-isolating.

[Company Name] is doing everything we can to support affected employees. We are following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state public health guidelines to keep customers, employees and our community safe. [select an option or edit to reflect your current situation]

1. For the safety of staff and customers, we will temporarily close until [month day] to conduct a thorough sanitation. When we re-open, we will continue keeping employees safe with health screenings, rigorous sanitation efforts, remote work operations when possible, staggered shifts and physical distancing.

2. We will continue our rigorous sanitation efforts, health screening, remote work environments when possible, staggered shift operations and social distancing practices to keep employees safe.

We are so proud of and grateful for the dedicated employees who continue to support our operations so we can continue offering our [services/products/etc.] to our customers.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IF YOUR BUSINESS HAS TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE DUE TO COVID-19 EXPOSURE

 FACEBOOK

 TWITTER

 INSTAGRAM

 LINKEDIN

Employee exposure to COVID-19 – temporary closure

Text: The health and safety of our staff and customers is our top priority. Due to suspected contact with COVID-19, we are temporarily closing our doors. We are sorry for the inconvenience and hope to resume operations as soon as it is safe to do so.

Suggested image to accompany social media content if your business has to temporarily close due to COVID-19 exposure
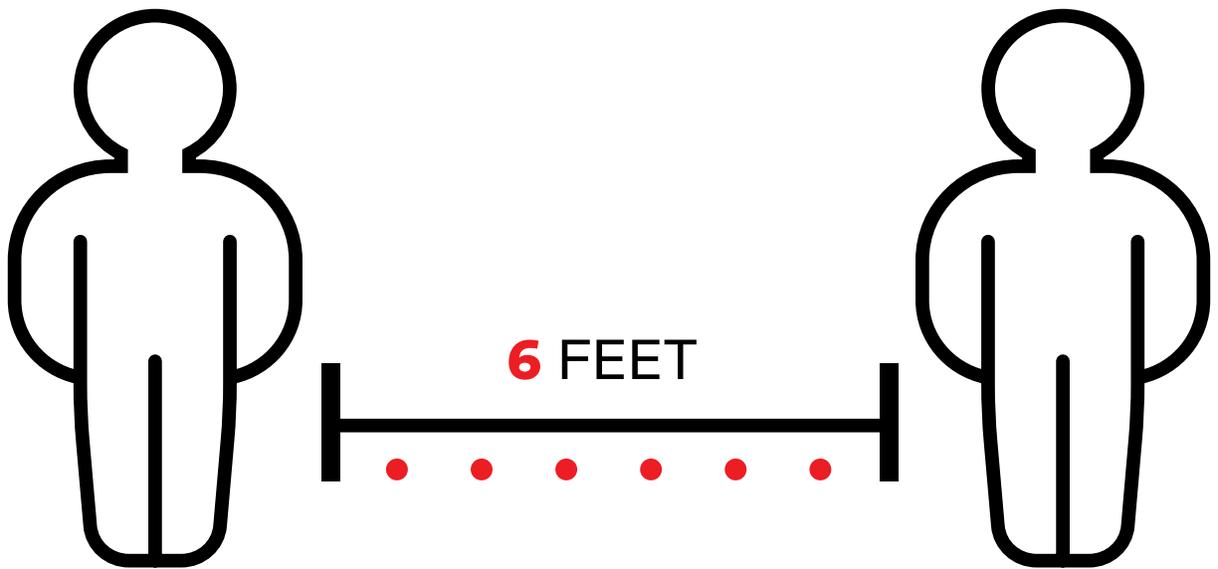
INSTAGRAM

FACBOOK

TWITTER

LINKEDIN

PLEASE
SOCIAL DISTANCE

Stay at least 6 feet away
from those around you

THANK YOU

6 FEET

DO THE **FIVE**
Help stop coronavirus

1 **HANDS** Wash them often

2 **ELBOW** Cough into it

3 **FACE** Don't touch it

4 **SPACE** Keep safe distance

5 **HOME** Stay if you can

# MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY NOT TO EXCEED

_____ *PERSONS*

WASH YOUR HANDS!
PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

1   **WET** your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.

2   **LATHER** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

3   **SCRUB** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

4   **RINSE** your hands well under clean, running water.

5   **DRY** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

GUIDELINES FROM CDC.GOV
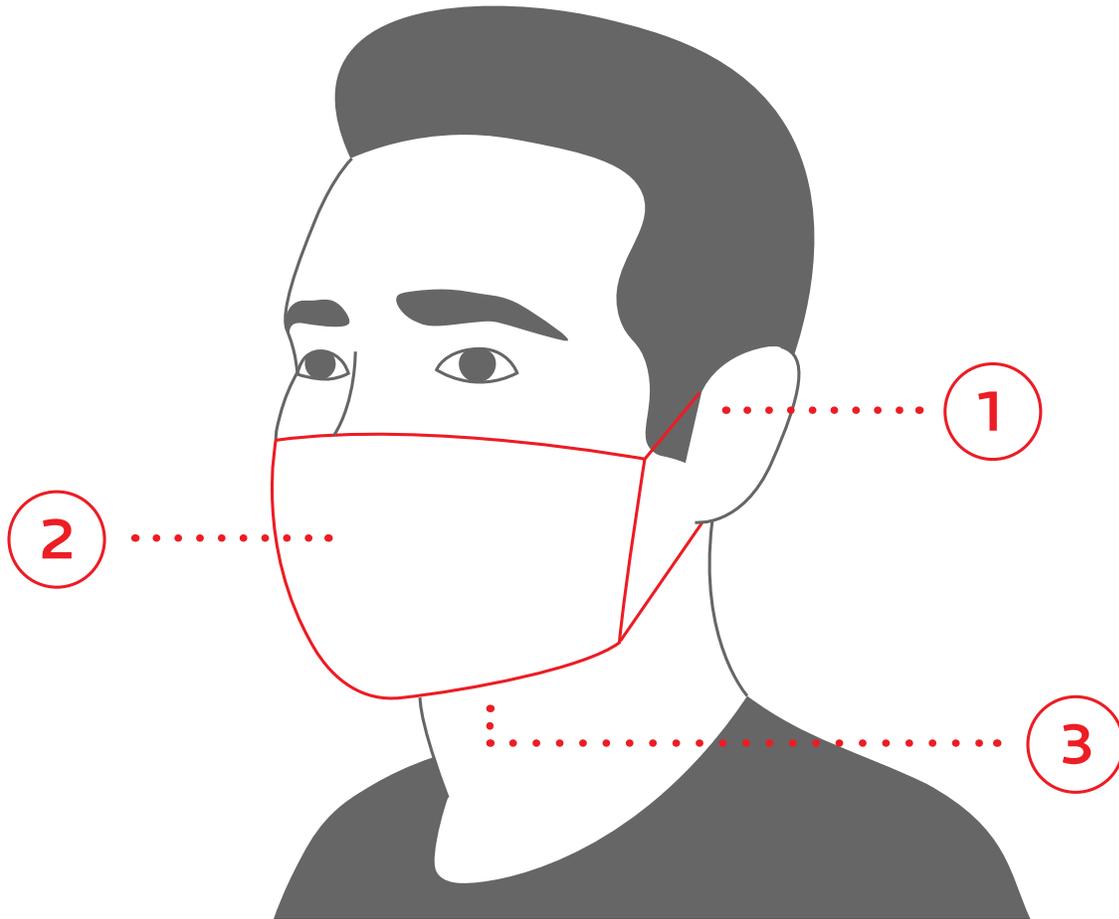
HOW YOUR MASK SHOULD FIT

1 Place any straps around your ears, or tie behind your head's crown and the nape of the neck to **SECURE MASK TO FACE**.

2 **COVER YOUR ENTIRE NOSE AND MOUTH**. Carefully pull and stretch the mask to adjust it around these areas.

3 Be sure to **TUCK THE MASK BENEATH YOUR CHIN** if possible, as this prevents shifting.

COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE THE RIGHT WAY

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS
THAT MAKE YOU AND OTHERS SICK

1 **COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

2 Or **COUGH** or sneeze into your **UPPER SLEEVE.**

3 Put used **TISSUE IN THE GARBAGE.**

4 **WASH YOUR HANDS** or use a hand sanitizer.

Don't cover your cough or sneeze with your hands.
You will end up spreading more germs via everything you touch.

HEALTH SCREENING

1 Do you currently have a **FEVER?**

2 Do you have a **COUGH?**

3 Are you experiencing any **RESPIRATORY ISSUES?**

4 Have you been in **CLOSE CONTACT** with anyone who has a confirmed case of **COVID-19**, or someone who is in the process of being treated for COVID-19?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions, you must return home and contact your manager!

If you answered "No" to all questions, please proceed.

VISITORS

DO NOT ENTER

The health facility if you have
any of the following symptoms:

1 **FEVER**

2 **COUGH**

3 **SHORTNESS
OF BREATH**

If you have symptoms, notify your healthcare provider or public
health officials immediately by calling: _____

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