

IS YOUR BUSINESS RESILIENT TO COVID-19?

Planning Tool



UNDRR

UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

10

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS RESILIENT TO COVID-19



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NOTE: The original version of this COVID-19 Planning Tool was developed by the **UNDRR Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** who encouraged groups to further customize and tailor for specific constituents and communities.

As a result, this version has been slightly updated by **MYD Global** for wider use and distribution.



Special thanks to content partners:



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Content also adapted from open-source material from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov

For more information go to: undrr.org/bcp-ap

Planning Tool

1. Stay Informed

- ❖ **Identify at least one person or selected team members in the workplace who will be a Focal Point for COVID-19.**
 - If your business is large enough, the focal point can help coordinate readiness activities, distribute information, answer questions and coordinate staff roles and responsibilities during an outbreak. The Focal Point could also be your future ongoing workplace contact for all hazards.

Name of Focal Point(s)	Job Title	Mobile Phone Number	Other Phone Number	Email

- ❖ **Seek information from your local health officials and other trusted sources for timely and accurate information.**
 - Trusted sources can also include the World Health Organization (WHO), federal government health departments, your local Red Cross/Red Crescent Society etc. If necessary, approach them for this information or ask your local economic development organization, business association or chamber to coordinate with them for regular updates.

Name of source of COVID-19 Information	Website	Contact Phone Number	Email

2. Identify your core products and services

❖ **Identify what products and/or services are essential to the survival of your business?**

- What are the products and/or services you must continue to deliver in order to remain operational? What services or products could you stop delivering temporarily?

Core products and/or services

❖ **Be prepared to change your business practices if needed** to maintain delivering your essential services or products (e.g. prioritize existing customers, downsize or temporarily suspend some of your services etc.).

Core products and/or services	Changes to be made	Timeframe to make changes	Person(s) responsible

3. Communicate with your employees and customers

❖ Inform your customers and clients.

- It is essential that you keep your customers and clients informed that your business is still open, when it will re-open or if your business hours have changed.
- Let them know what core services you still offer.
- This can be through email, business website, social media or mail. If customers don't hear anything from you then they may assume you are closed.

❖ Inform your employees.

- Keep your employees regularly informed on the changes you are making to your business. Consider involving them in your decision making process as well.

❖ Ensure you communicate your plans to business partners.

- Exchange ideas and practices with other businesses in your community and chambers of commerce to improve the overall response efforts and resilience of your community.

❖ Keep up to date contact information for all employees, clients and business partners.

❖ Get feedback from customers and clients. Consider establishing a survey to get feedback from employees, customers and clients on their needs and changes made to your business as a result of COVID-19

4. Establish policies for physical distancing and sanitizing workplaces

- ❖ **Physical distancing should be implemented if requested by local authorities.**
 - Physical distancing (also known as social distancing) means avoiding large gatherings and calls for people to maintain a distance of about 2 meters from each other when possible.
- ❖ **Reduce activities that will require staff to be in close contact with one another over a prolonged period of time.**
 - Consider asking employees to work from home as appropriate or rearrange your workplace layout so individual workstations have greater distances between them. In some instances, an employee may prefer to work from home depending on their family situation (e.g. children learning from home) and have flexible working hours.
- ❖ **Physical distancing strategies that a business could use include:**
 - Use minimum staffing requirements to support only essential services or products
 - Implementing flexible worksites (e.g. working from home) and flexible work hours (e.g. working in staggered shifts to reduce the number of employees at the same time, arranging a core time among team members may be helpful if necessary)
 - Increasing physical space between employees at the workplace (e.g. using less checkouts counters or moving computer workstations to be further apart)
 - Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g. using a car or motorcycle drive through, installing glass partitions in front of cashiers, or using tape on the ground to indicate space between customers waiting in line)
 - Implementing flexible meeting options (e.g. using teleconference or video options like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting etc.).
 - Encouraging contactless delivery at designated points and contactless electronic payment options to avoid clients having to handle cash, enter card PIN or sign receipts
- ❖ **Ask employees to notify you if they are travelling to affected areas** and that they should check their symptoms when they return. If they are sick, they should not report to work.

5. Protect Employee Health

- ❖ **Provide public health materials on COVID-19** that includes information on physical / social distancing, hygiene practices such as proper hand washing, coughing and sneezing practices, symptoms of COVID-19 and information on what employees should do and who to contact if they believe they may have been exposed.
- ❖ **Have all employees practice proper hygiene behaviour** such as properly washing hands, coughing and sneezing into their bent elbow or into tissues
- ❖ **Regularly clean surfaces** that are often touched, such as tabletops, doorknobs, toilets, and keyboards. Clean with an appropriate cleaning solution.
- ❖ **Inform and train your staff on what your COVID-19 response plans are once you have completed them** (e.g. work from home and sick-leave policies, changes in the workplace to account for social / physical distancing etc.).
- ❖ **Maintain the privacy of employees** with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection.
- ❖ **Inform employees** that some may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older people and those with medical conditions (such as diabetes and a weak immune system).

Protective strategies to be adopted	Person responsible

6. Plan how you will operate with absent employees

Employees may be more absent from your business due to increases in sickness, the need to care for sick family members, people with a disability who cannot get to work due to reduced public transport options (e.g. buses and trains shutting down), and those who must stay home to watch their children if childcare or schools are closing.

Possible strategies to adopt include:

- ❖ **Identify back-up personnel for key business operations** if staff fall ill and/or are unable to perform their responsibilities. Specifically, identify back-up personnel that can be authorized to make decisions in case of absenteeism.
- ❖ **Cross-train employees** to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.
- ❖ **Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees** about your staffing needs during the crisis
- ❖ **Prepare to have more flexible and special leave policies during the crisis** (e.g. giving advances on future sick leave or allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other). If you don't have these already, consider creating a new policy for them and be sure to provide that information with your employees. Also, explore if any such leave can be subsidized by the government.

7. Prepare your supply chain

- ❖ **Identify and talk to your critical suppliers**, discuss with them the risks to the supply chain and ask if the supplier has any preparedness plans.
 - Delivery of goods and services from other areas severely affected by COVID-19 may be delayed or cancelled with or without notice. This could greatly affect your own ability as a business to produce goods and services, even if you live in an area that is not affected by COVID-19.

- ❖ **Identify alternate supply chains** for your critical goods and services and in particular find alternatives to those that you currently rely on from only a single supplier.

- ❖ **Understand where you fit in the overall supply chain** before the final product gets to the customer. Others may be relying on you to provide them with a product or service.

Strategies to be adopted to strengthen your supply chain	Person responsible

8. Plan to modify your service delivery to customers

- ❖ **Prepare to modify how you deliver** your products and services to customers based on changes made by government regulations and/or to keep up with changes in customer demands. For example:
 - Customers may change their shopping patterns because of the disease outbreak such as shopping at off-peak hours to reduce contact with other people.
 - Customers may not be able to come to your business, so look at delivering your products through pick-up or delivery (e.g. restaurants /coffee shops focusing on delivering food if not allowed to have customers in the store), or delivering your services online or on the telephone.
- ❖ **Explore opportunities to adjust your production lines** to support unmet and growing demands in light of the COVID-19 impact (e.g. changing production line to start manufacturing alcohol-based hand sanitizer or personal protective equipment such as face masks).

Core services and products	Current service delivery method	Alternate service delivery method

9. Apply for crisis assistance to businesses

- ❖ **Many governments put in place economic stimulus packages**, including fiscal and non-fiscal benefits, and direct financial assistance to businesses or employees to assist them and reduce the impact of the COVID-19 on people's livelihoods.
 - Some examples include grants, tax breaks, welfare packages offered to help pay for employee wages or expenses, low interest disaster loans to help cover payroll, make debt payments, and pay other bills.
 - Some establish emergency business hotlines to register business needs and concerns.
 - Other options include: setting up a business recovery center; doing online surveys to capture immediate, short and long term business needs; providing seminars/webinars on specific topics, and/or offering case management for businesses.
- ❖ **Contact your local economic development organization and/or business association** and listen to the media for any announcements of government assistance packages being offered to businesses like yours.

Type of assistance	Contact details of organization offering assistance

10. Exercise your COVID-19 plan

❖ Put your plan down on paper

- Adopt a range of different strategies to address COVID-19. It's too risky to rely on just one idea to manage the crisis.

❖ The plan should be approved and dated by the owner and senior manager of the business.

- Your plan will have a higher level of success if the owner and senior manager are involved in the creation of the plan and officially sign off to endorse it.

❖ Test your plan

- Your plan should be tested at least once per year for various scenarios (natural disasters, pandemics etc.).

❖ Seek Feedback

- After testing, review how the testing went, seek feedback from your employees, and customers if possible, and change the plan where needed to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- Share your plan with other businesses and your local economic development organization or business association, as their experience and expertise could help you recover more quickly.

❖ Update Plan

- Based on testing and feedback, your plan should be updated at least once a year, or after every disaster event.



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Additional Resources:

Here are some additional useful resources:

- PIPSO – Pacific Business Continuity Plan Templates and Guides
<http://www.pipso.org.fj/resources/guides/>
- IFRC – Atlas: Your guide to business resilience (Mobile application for small businesses)
<https://www.preparecenter.org/activities/atlas-ready-business>
- IFRC – Business Preparedness Initiative
<https://www.preparecenter.org/activities/business-preparedness-initiative>
- LO - An employer's guide on managing your workplace during COVID-19
https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS_740212/lang--en/index.htm
- ILO – The Sustainable and Resilient Enterprises Platform (SRE Platform)
<https://conflictanddisaster.org/>
- ILO - The six-step COVID-19 business continuity plan
https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS_740375/lang--en/index.htm
- ITC – Supporting small businesses through the COVID-19 crisis.
<http://www.intracen.org/covid19/>
- UNDRR – Is your Business Disaster Proof?
<https://www.undrr.org/publication/your-business-disaster-proof>
- WHO - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public: Myth busters
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
- WHO Information for Employers and Workers
<https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/employers-and-workers>
- “Master Your Disaster” series of guidebooks
<https://www.masteryourdisaster.ca/>