



TIPS FOR CONTINUING OPERATIONS DURING HEALTH EMERGENCIES

During a health emergency, many jurisdictions may be required to maintain continued operations by having staff work at an off-site location, such as their home. Here are some tips that may help the transition go smoother while maintaining a continuity of operations, based on the experiences from a variety of jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions have found some of these tips to be so productive to operations, that they have implemented them on a permanent basis.

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

- Work with your jurisdiction's IT staff to transition agency desktop or laptop computers to the off-site locations where employees will be working. Encourage employees to not use personal devices when possible to avoid any potential future challenges by your agency in public records requests.
- Determine options for providing internet service for employees working off-site, such as providing wireless internet hot-spots.
- Set-up VPN features on computers that allow off-site access to secure systems.
- Use remote desktop programs to allow access to systems.
- For long term planning, transition from legacy-based systems to web-based systems to make access easier.
- Create electronic files of incoming mail that can be sent to staff working off-site.
- Establish a dedicated email that can be used to receive documents.
- Work with those responsible for your agency's telephones to give employees working off-site the ability to answer office phone numbers. Consider re-routing normal phone numbers to a call center that can re-route calls to specific staff working off-site.
- Consider utilizing internet-based voice communication technology to replace using phones, such as Google Voice.
- When unable to provide agency phones, utilize phone number blocking applications to protect employee's personal phone numbers.
- Never leave money in the building; have money deposited each day.
- In cases where customers conduct business in person, move credit card machines to the customer's area to minimize physical contact with items from customers.
- Have motor carriers submit required documentation electronically during audits when possible.
- Utilize certified mail when having difficulty in contacting motor carriers when necessary.

STAFF

- Keep a small number of staff on-site to mail credentials, etc.
- When possible, rotate the staff members that work on-site.
- Have a small number of staff members report on a particular day each week to complete any work that would be necessary to complete in the office.
- When conducting business off-site is not an option, re-arrange offices to allow for social distancing during health emergencies that require it.
- Allow staff the option of reasonably taking items from their normal office, such as their desk chair, to make their off-site office more conducive to productivity.

- Offer enhanced physical protection equipment for staff, such as increasing hand sanitizer stations in the office and placing polycarbonate shields at counters.
- Conduct meetings by utilizing video chat technology.
- Use the down-time opportunities to offer training to employees. Training could be completed electronically by utilizing video chat technology. Offer training found at www.irponline.org to employees.
- Implement security or other appropriate staff being stationed at the entrance(s) of your office building to greet customers and follow required protocols, such as requiring masks, taking temperatures, etc.
- In instances of training new staff, work with IT and telephone staff to set up the ability to listen in to phone calls. Some providers offer options that allow this, such as Cisco.
- If advanced notice is possible, have a small number of employees transition to working off-site to test the capabilities of the agency's computer systems to work remotely, thus allowing time for IT staff to fix any problems.
- Consider the option of working off-site on a normal basis as a recruiting incentive for open positions.

MOTOR CARRIERS

- Offer a drop box at a dedicated location that allows motor carriers to submit hard copies of necessary documents.
- Offer customers the option to send necessary documents via mail or other service, such as UPS or FedEx, that includes tracking.
- When possible, offer pre-paid envelopes to customers that they would use to submit necessary documents.
- When offices are able to remain open to conduct in-person business, offer customers the option of scheduling an appointment and require that only a minimal number of customers come inside the office at one time.
- Offer customers the option of bringing necessary documents to your office location, meet them outside the building, and have them wait in their vehicle while staff processes their work. Obtain a cell phone number for the customer, so staff can call or text them when they can return from waiting and pick up their credentials, etc.
- Recommend or require customers to wear masks when situations dictate it to be appropriate or to follow the requirements of emergency declarations.