



## Plan, Don't Panic

### Emergency Preparedness & Remote Working Best Practices

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has impacted us all, with a growing number of cases every day around the country. Below you'll find helpful information and resources to consider. Regardless of how your organization's operations are impacted by this virus, an emergency preparedness plan is always worth the time and effort.

Now may not be the time to completely upend your business as usual. For that reason, the information below gives practical pointers for you to put in place immediately, followed by suggestions to consider once we get used to this 'new normal'.

#### Emergency Preparedness & Response Tips:

##### Do this now

##### Think about this later

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| <p>Provide employees that are not providing essential direct services the opportunity to work from home.</p>                                                                                                                                            | <p>The opportunity to work remotely can not only make work/life balance easier for your team, it encourages retention and job satisfaction. If your organization doesn't allow for remote work already, consider what policies you can put in place to allow for occasional remote work – this may mean improving your communication practices, strengthening your performance indicators, and/or investing in technology.</p> |
| <p>Make sure all staff know they are <u>expected</u> to stay home if they feel unwell.</p>                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Look at your culture. Some organizations, or teams within organizations, have unintentionally created a culture that frowns upon sick days. Make sure your leaders model good self-care and encourage it in their teams.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>If resources allow, provide laptops &amp; other needed technology to staff working remotely. If your budget does not allow for this, investigate what security measures (if any) should be put in place to allow the use of personal technology.</p> | <p>As you upgrade your office technology, consider options that allow for remote work. Laptops + a docking station are a great combination solution for desktop &amp; remote work. Assess your use of cloud storage tools and see if improvements are needed to ensure work is not lost and collaboration can continue.</p>                                                                                                    |
| <p>Continue to pay your employees, even if your operations are suspended.</p>                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Revisit your leave policies to make sure all staff are adequately protected. Avoid relying on leave sharing policies to get everyone the time they need.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Communicate clearly and often with all staff.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Once we return to normal(ish), survey your staff to find out their thoughts and questions in relation to their job during the crisis. Did they feel adequately informed? If not, what was missing? Then use that information to improve your internal communications.</p>                                                                                                                                                   |

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| Post reminders about handwashing & sanitation procedures. Assign someone to make sure cleaning supplies and hand soap remain well-stocked.                                                      | Assess current sanitation procedures and upgrade as necessary. Stay abreast of industry trends.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Consider alternative ways to deliver services to minimize person-to-person contact and encourage social distancing when possible. Reach out to peer organizations to share ideas and resources. | Look at your emergency plans and make sure they are complete. They should address how you will maintain, suspend, or amend operations as well as a clear communication plan that includes staff, volunteers, the media, and the general public. |

### **Working from Home: Ergonomics**

Setting up a home workspace will be different for everyone. Not everyone has the benefit of a well-appointed home office. Here are some tips to maximize comfort and productivity.

#### **Take breaks:**

- Take a break every hour. Stand up and walk around your house, yard, or down the block. This is the best defense against a less-than-ideal workstation and can make you more productive.

#### **Chairs:**

- Use the best chair you can. If you have good chair at your office and can bring it home, do it. If not, choose a sturdy chair with no arms.
- Sit toward the back of your chair. Create lumbar support with a firm pillow or rolled up towel between your back and the chair.
- Do not spend all day on your couch with your laptop on your lap as this can lead to back pain. Put your computer on a desk or table.

#### **Desks & Monitors:**

- Arrange your workstation so the top of the monitor is at eye level when you are looking straight ahead. You may need to put your monitor on a stack of books to raise it to the correct height.
- Sit higher than your table so you don't need to reach up to use your keyboard to minimize wrist strain.
- Position your monitor so it is about arm's length in front of you.
- Put your workstation in a well-lit area to minimize eye strain.

#### **Keyboard & Typing:**

- If you use a laptop, refrain from using the built-in keyboard. Instead, use an ergonomically designed external keyboard and mouse.
- Use a gel pad to support your wrists.

#### **Phones:**

- Avoid cradling your phone between your neck and ear. Use a headset or speaker.

#### **A note about caregiving:**

School and facility closures mean many people are caring for children or other family while trying to work full time from home. Frank conversations among teams and with supervisors about realistic productivity in these situations are important to manage expectations. Consider setting an out of office message on your email and phone that alerts people to a potential delayed response.

Compassion and grace will help us all adjust as we continue to work toward our important missions during this unprecedented time. Remember to be kind and wash your hands.