GUIDE TO BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
CORONAVIRUS COVID-19
COVID-19

Guide’s objectives
On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization’s local office in China was informed of cases of lung infections causing an unknown illness in the city of Wuhan in China’s Hubei province. On January 7, 2020, Chinese authorities declared the new coronavirus as the virus causing these cases. This guide aims to clarify business continuity requirements and measures in the workplace in light of the 2019 coronavirus, COVID-19.

The guide covers the main operational risks below:
a. Human resources management
b. Commercial activities and jobs
c. Customers and suppliers management
d. Internal and external communication

This guide also helps:
a. Reduce employees’ health risks
b. Minimize the risks of worksites becoming centers for disease transmission
c. Ensure appropriate plans are in place in case employees are on vacation, quarantined, or infected
d. Secure alternative plans with customers and suppliers to maintain commercial operations
What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 belongs to the family of coronaviruses which are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The virus can also cause pneumonia like symptoms, as well as rhinorrhea (a runny nose), sore throat, coughs, and breathing difficulties.

The recent COVID-19 outbreak started in China but cases of infection have been reported all over the world.

Business Continuity Plans (BCP)

It is important for businesses to develop and execute continuity plans in order to minimize business disruption and to continue to operate during the virus outbreak, in-line with the following steps:
Human Resources Management

1. A business continuity director must be appointed to ensure all employees are aware of the business continuity plans and are successfully implementing them during that period. The decision depends on the number of employees and the size of the worksites, such that an assistant director must be appointed to carry out the director’s business continuity duties when necessary. A team must also be assigned to execute emergency responses.

The business continuity director’s main roles and responsibilities include:

- Actively following up on the spread of the virus and communicating clear instructions for employees to take precautions.
- Informing employees as to the latest available news about the virus, the preventive measures in place, and personal hygiene measures.
- Collecting employees’ updated contact details such as their addresses and mobile numbers, as well as ensuring they can reach the business continuity director since they must be informed if someone suspects a case of infection.
- Assigning at least one point of contact (POC), like the business continuity director, who will be responsible for communicating with the Ministry of Health if any cases of infection are detected in the workplace.
- Monitoring relevant websites daily, e.g. Ministry of Health.

For updated guidance (such as travel advice) and to keep employees up-to-date, visit:

www.moh.gov.sa/HealthAwareness/EducationalContent/Corona/Pages/corona.aspx

- Ensuring that the employees who were in infected areas are quarantined for a sufficient number of days according to the instructions of the Ministry of Health, and monitoring their situation.
- Ensuring that the workplace has an adequate supply of tissue papers/paper towels, disinfectants, and masks, in addition to placing hand-washing instructions in the restrooms.
- Securing the daily disinfection of auxiliary sites (e.g. depots), offices, and meeting rooms.
- Designating isolation rooms/areas for infected employees.
- Indicating the hospitals and clinics that infected employees can visit.

2. A business continuity plan must be put in place in case decision-makers, executives, and managers are absent.

3. Flexible work arrangements must be set for high-risk employees, as well as those who
4. To review all human resources policies such as annual leaves, sick leaves, closing international offices abroad, and recalling employees and their families from infected countries.

5. To abide by all the quarantine orders issued by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and other governmental entities. These include all the measures indicated by the Ministry of Health during the quarantine period. For instance, isolating employees returning from travels in quarantine for 14 days before entering the Kingdom, ensuring they do not leave the site for any reason, and following their personal vacation policies. Business owners can also adopt flexible work arrangements like allowing employees to work remotely from home.

6. To implement general safety rules, such as social communication without direct contact as recommended by the Ministry of Health.

7. To review employees’ health insurance plans.
Operations and Business Procedures

1. Identifying priority jobs and employees, while considering:
   - Establishing alternative teams of employees
   - Training employees and setting delegation arrangements to minimize risk
2. Establishing plans related to testing returning travelers and employees, as well as followup procedures in-line with the following model:

   a. Presence in the workplace

   **Returning traveler’s access to the workplace.**

   - Does the employee have a travel record outside the Kingdom in the past 14 days and/or did they come in contact with an infected individual in the past 14 days?
     - Yes
       - Deny the returnee's access to the workplace.
       - Arrange for alternative means of communication (e.g. online or remote conferences).
     - No

   - Are any tests (including the body temperature test) required by the employer or recommended by the Ministry of Health?
     - Yes
       - Are there any symptoms?
         - Yes
           - Returnee must wear a mask and go to the doctor.
         - No
           - Visitor is allowed to access the workplace.
     - No

**Note:**
- Additional procedures and measures may be necessary if advised by the Ministry of Health.
- Personal safety equipment (e.g. gloves, masks) must be available in the area welcoming returning travelers and employees.
b. Employee showing virus symptoms in the workplace

Employee shows symptoms of the virus in the workplace.

Does the employee have a travel record outside the Kingdom in the past 14 days and/or did they come in contact with an infected individual in the past 14 days?  
No

- Employee visits the doctor alone, and  
- Informs their supervisor and human resources of the test results.

Yes

- Business continuity director places the employee in quarantine.  
- Business continuity director arranges for the employee's transfer to the clinic or the designated hospital for medical examination.  
- Business continuity director declares the names and contact details (address and mobile number) of all the employees who work in the same space as the infected employee or who have been in contact with him/her.

Note:
- Additional procedures and measures may be necessary if advised by the Ministry of Health.
- Personal safety equipment (e.g. gloves, masks) must be available in the area welcoming returning travelers and employees.
c. Employee showing virus symptoms outside the workplace

Employee shows symptoms of the virus outside the workplace.

Employee must request medical care immediately when noticing any signs of the virus.

The employee, or one of their family members, informs the business continuity director if the employee is diagnosed with the virus or is suspected of being infected.

The business continuity director reports the case to the administration.

The employee is diagnosed with the virus.

Follow the procedures issued by the Ministry of Health.

No

The employee must take a medical leave as indicated and return to work only after receiving a medical report.

Yes

Develop an efficient plan to monitor cases of infection among employees.

Ensure a sufficient supply of personal protection equipment (PPE) and medical tools, such as thermometers, disposable gloves, face masks, and disinfectants; and schedule trainings for employees to use them correctly.

Sterilize and disinfect the worksites exposed to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
Customers and Suppliers Management

a. Identifying priority suppliers and service providers, and collaborating with them to develop business continuity measures in-line with the Business Continuity Plans for suppliers and service providers.
b. Identifying priority customers and ensuring relevant measures are in place.
c. Developing a plan as to how and when to start operations with alternative suppliers.

Communication Management

a. Assigning a communication director to develop a communication plan suitable to the business and its continuity.
b. Ensuring employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities before the virus spreads. For instance, employees must be informed of the BCP that will impact them and that will be updated by the management in case the virus spreads.
c. Establishing a communication channel for employees to report their situations and inquire about the virus.
d. Identifying relevant stakeholders such as suppliers, service providers, customers, and the main messages for each of them separately; in addition to launching discussions with them as to the possible emergency protocols during the virus outbreak.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Which prevention measures can an entity adopt to protect its employees?

1. The Ministry of Health shared general information on its website.
   www.moh.gov.sa/HealthAwareness/EducationalContent/Corona/Pages/corona.aspx
2. Launching preventive measures like the health and travel notices.
3. Adopting the 14-day home isolation protocol for employees with a travel record outside the Kingdom, and ensuring they stay home and avoid social contact.
4. Businesses in direct contact with customers must take the following measures:
   - To intensively clean worksites, especially the areas with public access and high rates of human contact (i.e. customer service areas, elevators, restrooms, and garbage rooms).
   - To follow the Ministry of Health’s instructions for cleaning and sterilizing areas infected with COVID-19.
   - To put in place clear instructions for front end employees as to how to deal with customers showing flu-like symptoms. For instance, front end employees can advise them to immediately visit a doctor.
   - Businesses must also implement necessary measures to protect its employees and others.

Q2. Can an employer send an employee to a confirmed infected area/country for a business trip?

The Ministry of Health has advised all travelers to cancel their trips to all infected areas, and to follow the procedures concerning the suspension of flights outside the Kingdom.

Q3. What are the protection and prevention measures taken by businesses to protect their employees?

1. Providing prevention plans for business continuity.
2. Providing safety and protection tools.
3. Reminding all employees to stay alert, to adopt good personal hygiene habits, and to take the following precautions at all times:
   - To avoid touching livestock including poultry and birds, and to avoid raw or undercooked meat.
   - To avoid crowded spaces and close contact with individuals who seem sick or are showing symptoms of illness.
   - To maintain good personal hygiene.
   - To repeatedly wash their hands with soap.
   - To wear a face mask if they have respiratory problems like a cough or a runny nose.
   - To cover their mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and to immediately dispose of the dirty tissue in the garbage bin.
   - To immediately request medical care if feeling ill.
Kindly visit the Ministry of Health website for more details and information:
www.moh.gov.sa/HealthAwareness/EducationalContent/Corona/Pages/corona.aspx
For investors, below is a list of governmental entities’ online communication platforms:

➤ **Ministry of Investment**
You can contact us via WhatsApp +966 1120 35 888 or via our social @SAGIAcare on Twitter, or by visiting our website: www.misa.gov.sa

➤ **Ministry of Justice**
Contact us via our 19911 call center, or visit our website for online services and information about working remotely at www.najiz.moj.gov.sa

➤ **Ministry of Labor and Social Development**
Contact us via our 19911 call center, or visit our website for online services and information about working remotely at www.najiz.moj.gov.sa

➤ **Ministry of Commerce**
You can conduct all your ministry-related operations by visiting our website at www.mci.gov.sa

➤ **Saudi Electricity Company**
You can access all the company’s services on our smartphone apps, which you can download by following these links: iOS - Android

➤ **Yesser (e-Government Program)**
You can easily access all their services at www.cio.gov.sa

➤ **Riyadh Municipality**
You can access the the online council by visiting the website www.grm.gov.sa, and you can access the e-services portal by visiting www.riyadh.gov.sa

➤ **General Authority of Zakat and Tax**
Contact us via our 19993 call center, or visit our website for online services at www.gazt.gov.sa

➤ **Council of Saudi Chambers**
You can contact the Council by phone (at 2182222), by e-mail (at info@csc.org.sa), or via social media networks (@CSC_SA on Twitter and @CSC.SA on Facebook).
Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources
You can contact the ministry by e-mail (info@mim.gov.sa), by visiting their website at www.mim.gov.sa, or via Twitter @Safeer_2016

Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs
You can access their online services at www.balady.gov.sa

Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization
You can access their online services at www.saso.gov.sa

General Directorate of Passports
You can access their online services at www.gdp.gov.sa