



NECSI

BUSINESS GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING THE CORONAVIRUS

The role of business and organizational leaders is to provide critical guidance and policies that balance the needs of employees, customers and the greater communities they work and live in. This is a guide for implementing immediate actions to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

Taking appropriate action begins with understanding and supporting the scientific and best practice protocols for practicing healthy safety throughout an organization. In the days and weeks ahead, operating a business will be challenging and the ability to adapt practices to continually changing circumstances is of utmost importance. It is no longer an option to conduct *Business as Usual*.

The most reliable course of action is to STOP THE SPREAD. Anyone can spread Coronavirus without knowing they have it or showing symptoms. One person who has the virus is capable of infecting 3 – 4 other people. This enables exponential growth and spread of the virus.

Every business should first educate and then encourage their employees to institute the following actions. These must be adopted as widely as possible.

Everyone should practice the following, whether they are at home or work.

- Stay at home as much as you can - especially if you feel sick.
- Work remotely if at all possible.
- Cancel travel plans for now.
- Avoid public places and transport.
- Wash your hands before and after any incident of contact for at least 20 seconds.
- Practice social distancing of 3 – 6 ft. at all times.
- Be conscious of where your hands are touching; avoid touching your face with your hands.
- Be careful with the sharing of physical items including all devices, especially mobile phones.
- Encourage your family, friends and social contacts to take similar precautions.

When your employees or customers must be onsite, consider what additional actions can be taken to increase safety. The [New England Complex Systems Institute \(NECSI\)](https://www.newenglandcomplexsystems.com/) has taken a leadership role in organizing an action network [endCoronavirus.org](https://endcoronavirus.org/) to minimize the impact of COVID-19 by providing continually updated and useful data and guidelines for action.

The research team has co-faculty, students and affiliates from MIT, Harvard, Brandeis and other universities nationally and internationally. Together with a growing network of

volunteers, they are working around the clock to monitor and communicate the current state of the COVID-19 epidemic.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has partnered with NECSI to develop this summary of actions businesses can take to reduce risks to everyone associated with a business (employees, customers and partners) and the business itself.

<https://iccwbo.org/publication/coronavirus-guidelines-for-business/>

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.

When you actively engage your employees, customers and extended community, you establish essential and trusted channels of communication.

- Focus on sharing continual and updated information for organizational and individual security.
- Create a communication strategy immediately that addresses two-way information exchanges. Information out and information in are both important.
- Ask for continual feedback and ideas from all employees. This could serve as both an immediate and longer-term vehicle for demonstrating how collective understanding and participation benefits everyone.
- Make it a priority to implement a formalized plan for remote and virtual practices including stable access for video or virtual collaboration, storage and security of sensitive data, and providing reliable connectivity.
- Communicate in as many ways as possible: text, email, voice mail, online message or group work spaces.
- If available, create opportunities for live, virtual, informal employee communications. The need for personal connections will soon become increasingly evident as individuals are more isolated. The “workplace” like other large social systems offer linkages to establishing, influencing and changing human behaviors.

Stay informed of rapidly changing information both locally and beyond.

<https://www.endcoronavirus.org/>

<http://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/resources/COVID-19/>