



COVID-19

What should you know?

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Introduction

The objective of this document is to help organisations know about COVID-19, the current situation and how should organisations be better prepared towards COVID-19 crisis. This document serves as an advisory to help organisations in the following ways:

- Protect human life
- Protect the organisations facilities
- Provide an acceptable level of operational and service continuity
- Repair and rebuild operations

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 commonly known as nCov is a novel strain of coronavirus. Initially called "2019-novel coronavirus", it was renamed severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The World Health Organisation has declared it to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The disease is now known as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The World Health Organisation have rated COVID-19 as a potential pandemic with credible risk. COVID-19 originates from a family of virus known as Coronavirus which cause mild respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

What are the symptoms and ways of transmission?

Symptoms include cold, fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, and chest radiographs showing bilateral lung infiltrates, muscle fatigue and tiredness in the first 14 days of exposure. Severe infection is more likely in people with underlying health conditions.

Transmission may have initially been from animal/environment to people however the main way nCov is now spreading is from person to person. The virus spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes or is sick and is in contact with a healthy person.

The Do's and Don'ts to avoid transmission of nCov:

Do's:

- Seek medical attention if you have respiratory symptoms and fever while travelling out of the country. Also share previous travel history with your health care provider
- Cover your cough with a disposable tissue or use a mask and discard them immediately in a waste bin
- Wash hands up to elbow often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after touching a suspected contaminated surface. Use an alcohol-based sanitizer with atleast 60% alcohol
- Clean doorknobs, handles, mouse, digital devices, pens, stair bannisters, cups etc.
- Medical authorities are advising anyone over 6 months of age to receive an annual flu vaccine, as this will reduce the risk of seasonal flu and possible confusion with COVID-19 symptoms
- People are advised to follow travel advisories before planning their travel to other countries
- Travel plans to high risk affected countries should be monitored closely to avoid unnecessary travels



Don'ts:

- Avoid coming into contact with people who are sick or share the personal items, food, utensils, cups and towels. Maintain distance from a sick person for up to 2m to 0.5m
- Avoid touching eyes, ears and nose when outside of home
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of nCov, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals
- Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked animal products. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices
- Avoid crowds or large gatherings

There is no specific treatment and no vaccine for mitigating this virus. However, prevention must be ensured to minimize the chance of exposure to nCov.



How should organisations plan to mitigate this risk?

Organisations should consider the following broad areas of operations in order to ensure minimal disruptions during this crisis.

- **Resource management**
- **Business and processes**
- **Client/vendor management**
- **Communication (internal as well as external)**

Resource management:

1. Establish a centralized crisis management function to ensure that leaders and others have real-time access to public health information and recommended practices for each of key geographies.
2. Recent travel records of employees shall be scanned to detect high risk employees who have recently visited affected countries.
3. Provide support to high risk employees with flexible hours and providing work arrangements to work remotely.
4. Divide each process into multiple teams and ensure alternate work timings and limitation of contact with each other.
5. Travel plans of employees to high risk affected countries should be monitored closely to avoid unnecessary travels. All employees are advised to make minimum public interaction especially in the high-risk zone.
6. Update employees about latest news and awareness regarding disease prevention and sanitization by means of trainings, meeting and conferences.
7. Keep staff informed about emergency process and emergency helpline numbers.

8. Transfer critical employees to an alternate site if the situation looks to be escalating in the current zone.
9. Issue a formal travel advisory barring their employees from visiting high risk zones.
10. Follow advisories issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Government of India (MoHFW).

Business and processes:

1. Identify critical business functions and determine minimum strength and distribution of responsibilities required to support the critical functions.
2. Review of business continuity measures and ensure multiple levels of redundancy in case of a critical system failure.
3. Make alternative arrangements for material supply and their timely delivery need to be made in case the deliverables are coming from or routed through compromised areas/regions.
4. Enable IT infrastructure like video, telephonic and digital counselling modalities etc., to support remote work which includes
5. Sanitize the premises of the workplace properly and on regular basis. Special care must be taken for the objects that are regularly being touched or contacted by everyone.
6. Ensure proper and maintained supply of all the equipment required (e.g. thermometers, surgical masks, sanitizers, gloves etc.) and proper training to be imparted to the employees for the usage of the same.
7. Ensure a centralized repository for information is used where critical information, decisions and plans are documented and easily accessible.

Client/vendor management:

1. Identify various critical clients, vendors, suppliers and other third parties.
2. Identify single point of failures with respect to third parties and ensure focused communication with them.
3. Assess the risk level of all third parties to check if critical third parties have a robust business continuity plan and is able to manage the crisis.
4. Issue guidelines for safe practices to third parties and their risk exposure must be checked on a weekly basis.
5. Aware all stakeholders about the symptoms of the virus (COVID-19) and about the precautionary and preventive guidelines provided by the department of MoFHW.
6. Ensure third parties create a formal set of procedures which every employee follows as precautionary methods to ensure smooth functioning of their business processes.
7. Establish various preventive and detective controls to ensure safety of the third-party work environment.
8. Evaluate the impact of the virus (COVID-19) on the third-party and supply chain and try to mitigate the risks.

Communication (internal as well as external):

1. Communicate with health departments and government bodies in order to receive updates about the pandemic.
2. Update and document the communication matrix in order to decide the flow of communication if nCov breaks out.
3. Identify a communications coordinator who will be responsible for initiating a communication flow established to communicate effectively with the employees and all third-party stakeholders.

4. Ensure regular communication with clients and regulatory bodies to ensure legal and regulatory compliance.
5. Monitor this outbreak and proactively communicate with people within organisation to explain the ways to prevent infection, review and implement their plans for virus outbreak (COVID-19).
6. Maintain communication templates for effective communication during the crisis.
7. Update internal communication plan to ensure that business continuity plans, any updates or changes can be communicated to relevant stakeholders.
8. Implement additional communication and management oversight in work environments where the transmission of respiratory illness is typically more prevalent.

How to manage this going forward?

Organisations should plan for an extended and uncertain period of time in which they may have to run on contingency measures. Health agencies are in the midst of containment efforts; however, it is uncertain how long these initiatives may take to bring regional outbreaks under control, or if these initiatives will be successful at all in preventing more widespread infection. As a result, organisations should ensure following steps to prevent extended disruptions:

1. Develop mechanisms, support capabilities and implement safe systems of work to ensure employee health and safety.
2. Devise and supplement existing contingency plans and measures to include the pandemic threats.
3. Conduct tests and simulations to assess these contingency plans and measures under different scenarios and at varying percentages of operational capacity.
4. Ensure proper methods to identify critical tasks and make decisions based on weighing risks against productivity in order to continue minimum operations.
5. Provide web-based training or informal orientation to educate employees on the crisis and process of responding to the crisis.



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