Introduction to Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

This plan is adapted from ESG’s Guide on Business Continuity Planning for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) - 2nd Edition.

Visit it for the latest edition of the BCP guide as well.

This Business Continuity Plan (BCP) covers:

a. Human resource management
b. Processes and business functions
c. Supplier and customer management
d. Communications, both internal and external

The BCP aims to:

• Minimise health risk to employees
• Minimise the risk of premises becoming a node of transmission
• Ensure plans are in place should employees be on leave of absence, quarantined or infected
• Ensure alternative arrangements with suppliers and customers so that business operations can continue
Human Resource Management

a. A Business Continuity Manager should be appointed to ensure that employees are familiar with the business continuity plans and comply with them during this period.

b. Develop a plan for the continuity of leadership in the event of absence of key decision makers and executives.

c. Consider flexible work arrangements for the high-risk employees, as well as employees who need to stay at home due to other reasons relating to the novel Covid-19 (nCoV), e.g. to take care of family members who have travelled to known affected countries or regions.

d. Review employee management policies such as leave of absence, absenteeism, sick leave, overseas travel, workplace closure and recall of non-critical employees and their families from affected countries.

e. Adhere to all travel and health advisories issued by MOH, MOM and other government agencies. For example, Singaporeans are to defer all travel to Hubei Province and all non-essential travel to Mainland China. Refer to MOH and MOM websites (www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan & www.mom.gov.sg/2019-ncov) for the latest updates so that an informed decision can be made on whether to proceed with business travel plans.

   • If business travel to known affected countries or areas is unavoidable and alternative options such as teleconferencing and video-conferencing are not possible, employers should arrange for their employees to consult a doctor for travel health advice prior to travel.

   • For employees whose work is performed in known affected countries or areas, employers should ensure that employees are adequately protected or monitored in accordance to MOH guidelines.

f. Obtain a health and travel declaration from employees who have travelled to China recently, or who have any upcoming plans to travel to China during the virus outbreak.

g. Comply with all quarantine orders issued by MOH, MOM and other government agencies. These include all measures prescribed by MOH, MOM and other
government agencies during the quarantine period. For example, all returning employees with Hubei travel history within 14 days prior to arrival in Singapore will be quarantined based on MOH advisory on 28 January 2020. Employees placed under quarantine must not leave their designated location for any reason. Refer to MOH, MOM and other government agencies’ websites for more details.

h. Adhere to all leave of absence advisories issued by MOH, MOM and other government agencies. For example, employees who had been in China (excluding those with Hubei travel history) in the past 14 days will be placed on a 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA) from the day of their return to Singapore based on the MOH advisory issued on 1 February 2020. Refer to MOH and MOM website for more details.

- During the 14-day LOA, employers must ensure that employees stay away from the workplace but employers may adopt flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and teleconferencing, to allow employees to work from home. Please see special arrangements for employees in education, healthcare and eldercare sectors in the relevant advisories by MOH and other government agencies
- If telecommuting or remote working is not possible, employers may refer to MOM’s advisory at [www.mom.gov.sg/2019-ncov](http://www.mom.gov.sg/2019-ncov) to better support employees’ needs

i. Include provision of accommodation in Singapore for foreign workers during the virus outbreak. Refer to MOM and other government agencies’ websites for more details

j. Check the MOH, MOM and other government agencies’ websites (e.g. [www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan](http://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan) and [www.mom.gov.sg/2019-ncov](http://www.mom.gov.sg/2019-ncov)) for the latest advisories and requirements on travel, health, quarantine and LOA and accommodation of foreign workers, as the situation evolves

k. Implement public health response measures, e.g. contact tracing and social distancing, as advised by the MOH

l. Review health insurance policies for workers
Processes and Business Functions

a. Identify critical business functions (prioritised activities) and essential employees. Enterprises should consider the following:
   - Set up alternate teams of employees (e.g. Team A & Team B) who can be deployed at different work schedules (e.g. Team A working in the office at alternate weeks, while Team B telecommutes). The teams should be physically segregated to avoid the risk of infection between teams
   - Cross-train employees and establish covering arrangements to minimise disruptions

b. Educate employees on infection control and good personal hygiene

c. Develop plans related to visitor and employee screening and follow-up actions (see on recommended procedures for screening visitors & employees)

d. Develop a robust employee sickness surveillance process to identify and manage unwell employees

e. Ensure adequate supply of appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and medical equipment (e.g. thermometers, disposable gloves, surgical masks, N-95 masks and disinfectants) and undertake training to familiarise employees on their usage

f. Clean and disinfect companies’ premises exposed to suspected or confirmed case(s) of the novel Covid-19 (nCoV). Owners or operators can refer to the interim guidelines for environmental cleaning and disinfection released by NEA
Supplier and Customer Management

a. Identify essential suppliers and service providers, and discuss and prepare business continuity measures. These include understanding the BCP of the suppliers and service providers

b. Identify essential customers and ensure that plans are in place to meet customer needs

c. Develop a plan on how and when to activate:
   • Alternative suppliers
   • Alternative delivery means to customers

Communications

a. Begin by identifying a communications coordinator who will disseminate your communications plan in line with your business needs and business continuity plans

b. Ensure that employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities before the virus outbreak occurs. For example, employees should be informed of the BCP measures that will impact them and be kept updated on the policies and progress on the measures to be implemented by the company in the event of a virus outbreak. Consider setting up a communication channel for employees to report their status and to make enquiries

c. Identify the relevant stakeholders such as suppliers, service providers and customers, and key messages for each stakeholder group; and begin a dialogue with them on potential contingency measures during a virus outbreak
DORSCON

a. MOH has developed a colour-coded ‘Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (DORSCON) framework that shows the nature of disease, impact on daily life and advice to the public at different alert levels. The current DORSCON alert level is found at [https://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan](https://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan)

b. The DORSCON alert levels should be used as a guide as to when enterprises will activate their business continuity measures and adopt infection control measures at their workplaces. As there may be a gradation of responses with each DORSCON phase and response measures may change during a virus outbreak, enterprises should build in buffer capacity and flexibility, where possible, in their existing BCP, so that measures can be ramped up or down, in-line with the advisories issued by MOH and other government agencies.

c. As the virus outbreak subsides, enterprises should also develop procedures to restore and return to business as usual