

Since December 2008, the Board of Trade has issued guidelines to help businesses and organizations in Greater Washington to better anticipate major planned and unplanned items such as active shooters, Presidential Inaugurations, and Swine Flu (H1N1). These guidelines have helped businesses to better prepare for safety, crowds, traffic, workforce mobility, business continuity, and more.

In an effort to assist businesses in preparing for potential disruptions with a continuing spread of COVID-19, the Board of Trade is once again issuing guidelines, arranging updates, and organizing conference call briefings as necessary. While reports have not yet identified the presence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Greater Washington, now is the time to prepare for how a widespread outbreak might impact your workforce and business operations.

For individuals, the Center for Disease Control is the most up-to-date and official source of outbreak information. There are specific steps that individuals can take to minimize risk of exposure, and those steps are shared in detail at the CDC website www.CDC.gov.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for organizations as they prepare for the potential implications of a pandemic. However, in assisting area businesses to prepare for a widespread outbreak, the Board of Trade recommends the following considerations:

- **Create a task force**

Companies, firms and organizations conducting business in and around Greater Washington should consider immediately establishing an internal task force to stay current on the latest news and issues concerning the virus and to monitor the organization's preparations. This task force might include personnel from human resources, IT, executive office, finance and operations.

This task force should be organized to communicate throughout the duration of the disruption. Multiple communication channels (e.g. email, text, business collaboration tools such as Skype, Slack and Zoom) should be arranged so that the task force can stay in contact.

A central virtual location should be created to assemble and review all pertinent documents and data needed to make informed decisions moving forward. Specific roles and responsibilities should be assigned and regular, orderly updates should be reviewed to determine adjustments and action steps appropriate to respond to new developments.



- **Clarify lines of authority and communication protocols**

- Develop or review organization delegations of authority for emergency operations.
- Designate essential and non-essential staff
- Be clear about decision-making authority and how decisions will be relayed/announced.
- Develop or review orders of succession for emergency operations.

- **Develop a plan**

Develop a comprehensive plan for conducting business with multiple scenarios that address operations ranging from a reduced staff presence to no staff being able report for work. Assess the impact that disruption would have on staff, clients, suppliers, contractors, vendors, service providers and other dependencies up and down the line.

Attention should be given to:

- school closure implications
- transportation complications (Metro, commuter rail and buses, air travel)
- building access
- security issues
- staffing needs
- transportation implications for providing or receiving goods and services
- procurement
- banking (including payroll, check processing and cash needs)
- telecommunications demand (ability to work from home, connecting to office IT systems, etc.)

Consider the development and implementation of a personal hygiene program and procure personal protective supplies.

Also consider the following:

- Understand what it means to be out of the office for an extended period of time (one week through multiple weeks)
- Develop a best case/worst case scenario plan
- Review contracts (ones requiring you to perform certain responsibilities and ones where you require others to perform to certain expectations)
- Review leave policies
- Review travel policies, restrictions and current plans
- Assess financial implications for your business including cash flow, inventory, bills, receivables, budgets, contracts, and upcoming major activities or events that carry financial obligations



- **Validate communications**

Update or validate your communication operations with key personnel. Be sure that everyone understands how to get information from management if that becomes necessary. Update phone and email contact information.

Review policies and procedures associated with flexible working conditions or telecommuting. Confirm that everyone has the current information necessary to work from home and access central systems.

Consider creation of a regular organization-wide voicemail and/or email update.

Address the risks for fraudulent communications and have a plan for ready response and corrections with accurate information.

Reach out now to staff, suppliers, customers and other key people to inform them of your contingency plans and appropriate contact information. Determine how to best reach customers with updates on organizational operations.

- **Stay current**

Track websites (www.CDC.gov), news updates, briefing calls and email messages to stay current on the restrictions and announcements that may be coming rapidly.

Important Links on Coronavirus (COVID-19) per state/jurisdiction:

- [DC Health](#)
- [MD Department of Health](#)
- [Charles County](#)
- [City of Frederick](#)
- [City of Bowie](#)
- [City of Greenbelt](#)
- [City of Hyattsville](#) (3/3/20 Webinar)
- [Prince George's County](#) (Fact Sheet)
- [Montgomery County](#)
- [VA Department of Health](#)
- [City of Falls Church](#)
- [City of Manassas Park](#)
- [Prince William County](#)
- [Arlington County](#)
- [City of Alexandria](#)
- [City of Fairfax](#)
- [Fairfax County](#)
- [Loudoun County](#)
- [City of Manassas](#)