

**Guidelines for Enterprise Planning of Business  
Continuity in Response to the Coronavirus  
Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

**Edited by**

**Central Epidemic Command Center**

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## **One. Introduction to COVID-19 Pandemic**

The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is the pathogen that causes the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19, also known as “Wuhan Pneumonia”). Most transmission of human coronaviruses are the result of infection by direct contact with secretions or droplets. In humans, coronaviruses mainly cause symptoms common to respiratory ailments, including stuffy nose, runny nose, cough and fever. In some cases, more serious respiratory disease like pneumonia can follow, and in some severe cases death can occur.

The COVID-19 pandemic originated from the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the Wuhan Region of China in late 2019, and has currently spread to all regions of China and across the world. In Taiwan, there are currently confirmed indigenous and imported cases. For latest information on the COVID-19 pandemic, please refer to the website of the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Currently, the COVID-19 situation in Taiwan is limited to only sporadic cases of community acquired infection; however, as the risks of possible widespread community infection become increasingly higher, it is anticipated that the businesses and enterprises will face varying degrees of impact and risks posed from the COVID-19 infection. To assist enterprises in maintaining continuous business operations and minimizing the losses amidst the threat of COVID-19, the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (Taiwan CDC) has developed this set of guidelines, as well as a streamlined

version (see appendix) that instruct enterprises on how to evaluate the risks and implication of business continuity in the event of “sporadic community acquired infection” and “onset of community transmission”.

## **Two. Risk and Impact Assessment**

Since COVID-19 is a novel communicable disease, its transmission capability, severity and other characteristics are currently under study. Therefore, it is difficult to accurately estimate the scale of infection and quantity of severe and fatal cases. With regards to Taiwan, currently the pandemic situation has yet to progress to widespread community-acquired infection, and remain limited only to cross-border imported cases, familial clusters, contact histories, and sporadic nosocomial (“intra-hospital”) and community-acquired infection. However, although the present situation remains under control, impacts to the business operations of certain manufacturing and service industries are already being felt, as a consequence of the impacts brought by this disease from China and other countries in the world.

### **I. Current phase (sporadic community-acquired infection)**

Possible risks and impacts in relation to enterprise operation include:

- **Workforce attendance:** employees with travel or contact histories develop fevers or respiratory ailments and cause employees, employee’s family members or colleagues being placed under quarantine, which in turn lead to shortness of manpower.
- **Sales and Marketing:** employees are unable to go on business trips due to travel notice warnings, reduced airline flights or

transportation bans that result in changes to business operation hours, delayed product shipments, penalties from clients and supplier replacement.

- Manufacturing operation: impacts on business operation due to reduced shipments or transportation bans may result in cut-off from raw materials supply, delayed delivery, and shipment being delayed due to workforce attendance, as well as financial difficulties. The impact may last up to 2-3 months.

## **II. The pandemic progresses to continuous or widespread community transmission**

Possible risks and impacts in relation to enterprise operation include:

- Workforce attendance: suspected cases at the office, employees confirmed with the disease under quarantine who cannot come to work, other personnel under quarantine or self-health management who cannot come to work normally, and suspicion of cluster infections leading to more employees and their family members requiring quarantine, which then result in severe manpower shortage; suspension of business operation due to closed offices, work places and business locations.
- Sales and Marketing: business operation is forced to suspend due to reduced flights, shipment or transportation bans affecting business trips and oversea exhibitions; reduced production line operations or suspension leading to penalties and long-term order transfer; inability to make loan payment leading to repeated reminders of interest collection by banks.

- Manufacturing: shortage of raw material inventory, cut-off from parts and raw material supplies; up- and down-stream industries delaying shipment and delivery, resulting in suspension of manufacturing; impacts on basic infrastructures of companies such as utilities, fuel and HVAC system; impact on logistics operation delaying shipment or overstocking resulting in impaired business finances and capital movement. Such impacts may last up to 2-3 months or 6 months.

### **Three. Response Strategies**

Enterprises should designate personnel responsible for epidemic prevention and establish an epidemic response unit, whose duties may include (but not limited to) the following: constantly updating the changes in epidemic situation, advocating and promoting epidemic prevention, stockpiling and inventory of epidemic prevention supplies, conducting health management, monitoring personnel, and carrying out disease reporting and epidemic response preparation. The applicable subjects include (but not limited): enterprise employees (including foreign migrant workers), contractors, clients and oversea office personnel.

#### **I. Recommended enterprise response strategies for the current phase (sporadic community-acquired infection)**

##### **(I) Recommendation for epidemic prevention**

##### **1. Actively encouraging employees with fevers or acute respiratory symptoms to stay at home and rest**

- (1) Employees with acute respiratory symptoms are advised to stay at home and rest for at least 24 hours, and not to return to



work until symptoms like elevated body temperature and fever improved – without the premise of taking antipyretics or drugs that relieve related symptoms (e.g., cough medicine).

- (2) Adjust regulations for leave application. Do not force employees with acute respiratory disease to submit proof of diagnosis for the purposes of verifying disease condition or resuming work. (This is because medical institutions may be inundated with workload and unable to produce such proof documents. Additionally, employees with mild symptoms should also avoid going to hospitals, in order to reduce the risks of further infection).
- (3) Maintain a flexible leave application policy and allow employees to stay at home to take care of sick family members. Employers should understand that compared to a normal situation, employees may need to spend more time at home and take care of sick children or family members during times like the epidemic period.
- (4) Ensure that the enterprises' leave application policy is flexible and complies with government regulations, and ensure that employees are aware of these regulations.

## **2. Personal and work place sanitation management for employees with fevers or acute respiratory symptoms**

- (1) Employees developing fevers or acute respiratory symptoms (such as coughing or shortness of breath) during work hours and in work places should immediately inform their supervisors. Company should request employees to wear face masks and transfer them to an individual space, or locations

that maintain a distance from other employees. Company should also assist employees to seek medical attention or return home.

- (2) Employees who are sick should wear face masks and use tissue papers to cover their noses and mouths when sneezing or coughing. Used tissue papers should be discarded immediately into a contact-less trash receptacle; if tissue papers are unavailable, use the elbow or shoulder to cover the noses and mouths, and strengthen hand hygiene/ hand sanitizing.

### **3. Advocating proper cough etiquette and hand hygiene to employees**

- (1) Affix posters that advocate proper cough etiquette and hand hygiene maintenance at entrances to businesses or other conspicuous locations, and encourage rest at home when sick.
- (2) Provide soap, clean water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers at work places and ensure sufficient quantities. Place the hand sanitizers in various locations or meeting rooms to encourage employees to maintain hand hygiene.
- (3) Instruct employees to frequently wash their hands with soap and flowing clean water for at least 20 seconds, or clean their hands with hand sanitizers containing alcohol (at least 70% v/v ethanol). Employees should prioritize using soap and clean water to wash their hands when there are visible dirt and stains on the hands.

### **4. Regularly cleaning the environment and maintain good indoor**

## **ventilation**

- (1) Regularly clean all surfaces of items that come under frequent contact in the work places, such as table-top surfaces, electronic equipment, door handles, buttons or switches on machineries and electronic appliances. Use detergents for routine cleaning of these areas and follow the labeled instructions.
- (2) Currently, it is advised to not implement additional sterilization measures other than the routine cleaning procedures and epidemic measures advised by the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) for places of high risks.
- (3) Have disposable wipes available for employees to wipe the surfaces of these frequently used items, e.g., door handles, keyboards, remote controls and office desks.
- (4) Maintain good indoor ventilation, open windows or air vents to circulate air. If using air conditioning, open at least one window with an opening at least the width of a fist.
- (5) The central HVAC system should be configured to increase the ratio of fresh air, and reduce the recirculation of indoor air. The air filters should be changed or cleaned regularly.

## **(II) Flexible measures for employee attendance and business trips**

1. Follow Taiwan CDC's travel notices for international destinations and understand the latest guidance and recommendation for intended travel destination.
2. Employers should prioritize consideration of the health and safety of the employees during the COVID-19 epidemic and

avoid assigning employees to make unnecessary trips to epidemic outbreak regions such as China. Employers should consider using video calls or tele-communication methods to maintain business operation, or negotiate with employees to adjust their working locations and work content.

3. Ensure that employees understand that their supervisors should be notified when they become sick during business trips or temporary assignments, and seek advice by calling the Communicable Disease Reporting and Consultation hotline, 1922, when necessary.
4. Employees who become sick abroad should follow the company's policies on medical assistance, or contact entities such as healthcare service providers, oversea medical assistance service providers or officials of Taiwan's oversea embassies and mission offices for assistance to find suitable local healthcare service providers.

### **(III) Measures for business continuity**

1. Draft a business continuity plan (BCP) and designate a project leader, conduct education training for employees (may refer to the "Guidebook on Small and Medium Enterprises Business Continuity Planning").
2. Devise substitution mechanisms for decision-making power, critical technology and personnel.
3. Devise solutions for off-site (remote) office work, off-site backup, replacement supply chains, and distribute sourcing of raw materials and parts.

4. Devise solutions that meet the needs of important clients.
5. Sales and Marketing: utilize digital tools such as video calls to maintain the trust relationship with clients, or use digitalization to increase the capacity for taking online orders.
6. Manufacturing: acquire machinery or information technology equipment to address the needs for remote operation or working-at-home. Actively ensure that raw material sources and logistic channels remain open to address the needs for product shipments or urgent orders. Businesses that have been impacted may consider partially suspending services, plan for education training or on-the-job training for employees, or take the opportunity to make improvement to the business operation places, so that the businesses can rapidly return to normal operation once the epidemic has subsided, as well as promoting faster industry upgrade.
7. Make good use of relief measures or resources provided by the government to maintain basic operation, or conduct upgrade to business operation and competitiveness.

#### **(IV) Other policies**

1. For employees that are currently healthy but have been determined to possess a risk of infection by epidemiological survey and risk assessment of health authorities, employers should ensure that during their 14-day home quarantine and isolation period, employees should stay away from normal place of work but have flexible working arrangements made for work from home, such as remote working or teleconferences.

2. If the employee(s) is confirmed with SARS-CoV-2 infection, the employer should cooperate with health authority's epidemiological survey and evaluate the risk of exposure to other colleagues at the work place. However, the survey should observe all regulations concerning personal privacy and confidentiality. Based on the results of risk evaluation, employee(s) should be placed under home quarantine or self-health management.
3. For subjects at risk of infection, please refer to the latest information on home quarantine, isolation or self-health management announced by the CECC (website: <https://www.cdc.gov.tw/>), and ensure such information is acknowledged by the employees.
4. Employees should cooperate with health authorities on home quarantine or isolation and avoid going to work. Employers should grant isolation or quarantine related work leaves and are prohibited from treating it as absenteeism, or force employees to apply for personal leaves or other classification. Additionally, employers are also prohibited from forcing employees to fill in missed work, deduct full-attendance bonuses, dismiss employees, or issue detrimental penalties. Employers should apply for epidemic prevention compensation with the government during quarantine or isolation period.
5. If it has been determined that employees have contracted SARS-CoV-2 infection on account of performing occupational duties, employers shall grant occupational sick or public leaves and issue compensation payment equivalent to the original wages. In

the event of employee death, disability, injury or sickness on account of occupational accident, employer shall grant compensation for occupational hazards in accordance with the regulations of Labor Standard Act.

6. As of March 1, 2020, based on the information announced by the CECC, all medical institutions at risk of virus infection should request all workers to wear face masks. Work places without risks of infection do not need to force mask-wearing policies on workers; however, employers are forbidden to prohibit workers from wearing masks by individual will. Business employers should cooperate with the information announced by the CECC and follow the “Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Sanitation Protection for COVID-19”, published by the Ministry of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration, to make timely adjustments and revision to mask policies, ensuring that the worker’s safety and health are guaranteed.

## **II. Recommended strategies for businesses during continuous or widespread community transmission**

### **(I) Regulations on epidemic prevention**

#### **1. Implement personal and workplace hygiene management**

- (1) Devise and implement employee health monitoring plan and measures for handling and tracking abnormalities, such as: health monitoring survey, conduct routine temperature check for employees entering work sites, make inquiries about acute respiratory symptoms and file as record. Employees with a

fever or acute respiratory ailments should refrain from working and seek medical attention immediately.

- (2) Rules on visitation should be placed in conspicuous locations near the entrance to the business premise. Make alcohol-based hand sanitizers available for use by visitors, and devise a health survey for visitors before entering work sites. Visitors at risk for fever or acute respiratory symptoms should be requested to not enter the work site, and provide information on medical assistance as needed.
- (3) Enforce resting at home when sick: requires employees to adhere to cough etiquette and maintain good hand hygiene, including washing hands frequently with soap and clean water. The company/enterprise should provide sufficient quantities of soap, clean water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissue papers and contact-less trash receptacles.
- (4) Regularly clean the office environment and maintain good indoor air ventilation. For disinfection measures other than routine cleaning, please follow the latest regulations from the CECC.
- (5) Workers who have developed a fever and upper respiratory symptoms during work hours or duties should immediately report to the supervisors, wear face masks and transfer to an individual space or location that maintains distance from other employees (or in a well ventilated space with few foot traffics), and seek medical attention at a nearby medical institution as soon as possible.

## **2. Environmental epidemic prevention measures to implement**



**when confirmed infection case(s) exist within the company/enterprise**

- (1) Environmental disinfection of the work place: if the environmental sanitation and disinfection is contracted to an outside contractor, ensure that the sanitation personnel are properly trained and equipped with proper personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, face masks, isolation garments or water-proof aprons, and use goggles or full-face shields as necessary) to prevent the eyes, nose and mouth from exposure to disinfectants. For enterprises that handle their own sanitation work internally, personnel should also undergo proper training and wear personal protective equipment (gloves, face masks, isolation garments or water-proof aprons, use goggles or full-face shields as necessary). For preparation of disinfectant, dilute bleach/Sodium hypochlorite (1000 ppm) with water in 1:50 ratio (made on the scheduled day of cleaning; 1 part bleach/sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of cold water). Use a mop or cloth and wipe the surfaces of the environment (e.g. table-top and chairs) and the floor, let the disinfectant work for about 1-2 minute, and then wipe or mop the surfaces with wet cloths and mops. The floor should be disinfected at least once per day, and increase the cleaning frequency as required.
- (2) Employees not under home quarantine/isolation and who share the common office or activity space with the confirmed cases are advised to wear face masks during work hours and step up the management of personal hygiene, like washing hands frequently (especially after coughing, sneezing and using bathroom). Wash hands immediate when exposed to

respiratory secretion or body fluids like urine and feces. Avoid directly touching the eyes, nose or mouth with hands.

- (3) Implement self-monitoring of health status: actively report to the supervisors or person in charge about any fever or respiratory ailments, adopt proper protective measures and seek medical attention.
- (4) Cooperate with the regulations and guidelines announced by the CECC and local health authority and implement epidemic prevention measures.

**(II) Adjust work hours, office hours, attendance or business trips to reduce cross-transmission between employees**

1. Definition of cases exposed to confirmed COVID-19 infected cases: subjects who have come into face-to-face (close) contact or exposed to confirmed infected employees for a prolonged period of time (longer than 15 minutes), without proper protection measures, and were exposed to the confirmed cases during the period between the onset of disease to isolation. The contact cases will be classified based on the results of epidemiological survey conducted by the health authority. However, if there are confirmed cases in the work place, employers may follow the current standards and evaluate the possible risks of exposure for their employees, and devise epidemic prevention measures accordingly.
2. Implement flexible coordination of workforce, establish off-site working mechanisms, reduce the number of concurrent workers, or investigate the feasibility of working from home.

3. Adjust working space to maintain proper distances between seats, and implement spatial segregation between employees and clients or other collaborating partners.
4. Refer to the Taiwan CDC's website on international travel warnings and notices, and consider cancelling any unnecessary overseas business trips since other countries may implement travel restriction or bans that will impact the employee's business trip and return schedule.
5. A company should consider cancelling or delaying any large scale assemblies/conferences or events that are related to work, and consider other alternative solutions. A company should also advise employees to refrain from participating in mass events or activities.
6. As the number of employees on sick leaves may increase, a company/an enterprise should conduct cross-training of personnel for essential occupational capacity, so that business operation can be maintained even when critical personnel are on leaves.
7. As some daycare centers or schools may postpone or suspend classes, employees may apply for leaves to take care of children at home. Employers should provide a flexible mechanism when employees apply for child care leaves
8. For regulations on employee attendance, please adhere to the regulations stipulated in the Labor Standards Act.

### **(III) Measures to maintain business continuity**

Concerning the response measures for business continuity,

apart from the following 1-6 items and recommended items for sporadic community infection, since the epidemic has entered the phase of community transmission, it is suggested that businesses can incorporate items 7-9 below into their strategies:

1. Sales and marketing: utilize digital tools to convey externally that the business is operating normally; maintain the trust relationship with clients via teleconferencing or video calls; confirm the limit to order capacity during manpower shortage period, and negotiate with client to extend the delivery period; negotiate with financial institutions for interest extension or grace period.
2. Manufacturing: adjust the production quota impacted by remote working or staff shortage. Businesses that have been severely affected may consider temporarily suspending production and services, as well as arranging for employees to participate in online training, making improvements to work places, or engaging in research and development so that businesses can recover operation quickly once the pandemic subsides, while simultaneously encouraging industry upgrade.
3. Devise a business continuity plan, assign person in charge and conduct employee education training (please refer to the “Guidebook on Small and Medium Enterprises Business Continuity Planning”).
4. Devise the substitution mechanism for critical decision-making power, technology and personnel.
5. Devise solutions for off-site (remote) working, off-site backup and supply chain replacement.

6. Devise solutions that meet the needs of important clients.
7. Actively ensure that raw material sources and logistics channels remain accessible for product shipment and urgent orders.
8. Build up education capacity for employees: organize employee training or arrange for employees to participate in government-organized training courses, increasing professional capacity of employees and stimulate industry upgrade.
9. Digitization: reduce production lines, adjust production capacity, and utilizes technology to develop digitized business operation.
10. Take advantage of government's relief measures or resources: e.g., negotiate for extension of bank loans, and guarantee policy-related loans or subsidies; apply for government-provided research project grants (such as the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)) program; subsidize airline and aerospace industries for at least an year to reduce their operation cost burden; postpone collection of domestic terminal fees up to 4 months to alleviate the pressure of cash flow for the business operators, which allow them to return to normal operation to meet the once oppressed market demand after the pandemic situation has subsided.

#### **(IV) Other policies cooperation**

1. The severity of pandemic may differ by regions. Health authorities may announce specific guidelines targeted toward certain regions. Therefore, businesses are advised to stay updated on the most accurate epidemic information at their

location, and to cooperate with the regulations of the local health authority to implement appropriate measures.

2. Establish channels and procedures to communicate information on epidemic prevention plans and latest epidemic status to all employees and business partners.

#### **Four. Response organization or emergency contact network**

- I.** Establish a designated unit: it is advised that businesses form designated units to handle the organizational response and related affairs of the business, ensuring the core missions can continue to operate with faster recovery.
- II.** Assign personnel as person in charge of response: this person should be in charge of coordinating response measures and ensure they are properly implemented.
- III.** Business operation stakeholders: establish emergency contacts with business operation related entities, such as down-and-up stream vendors, banks, loans and financing, custom declaration and logistic vendors.
- IV.** Government assistance:
  1. Central Epidemic Command Center: 1922.
  2. Instant Service Center, Small and Medium Enterprise Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs: 0800-056476
  3. Industry Competitiveness Development Center, Ministry of Economic Affairs (Industrial Development Bureau, MOEA): 0800-000257
  4. Ministry of Labor: 1955

5. Department of Railways and Highways, Ministry of Transportation and Communication. Contact person: Yu Ping Lin; telephone: 02-23492154

6. Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication. Contact person: Shi Ming Liu; telephone: 02-23491500 ext. 8200

### **Five. Verifying the feasibility of the business continuity plan**

#### **I. Complete the business continuity plan (BCP)**

Businesses are advised to implement a business continuity plan so that the operational priorities (critical missions) suspended during the epidemic period can be quickly restored.

#### **II. Organize practice drills**

In order for the BCP to exert its planned functions under different scenarios and achieve the set objectives, it is advised that businesses should organize practice drills to verify the feasibility of the BCP. For example, the following measures of the BCP can be practiced: method of disinfection when the company has confirmed cases; employee health monitoring; adjustment to critical missions when employees were not in attendance; and planning of work space in the office. These steps should be practiced beforehand to verify that the planned procedures can be properly carried out during the actual incident, as well as reviewing any issues and concerns discovered during the practice drill and implement appropriate improvement measures.

#### **III. Review and Revise**

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the planned measures, business proprietors should supervise and review the BCP measures during and after the epidemic, and to consider any issues that have risen, and seek ways to improve them. Business proprietors should also consider the possible effects of the changes in business operation have on external partners (suppliers or vendors), core business operations (products or services), information system or financial departments, and to conduct regular review to continuously improve the business operation planning.



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- 10.LINE@CDC, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare: <https://page.line.me/vqv2007o>.
- 11.COVID-19 advocacy posters, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare:

<https://www.cdc.gov.tw/Advocacy/SubIndex/2xHloQ6fXNagOKPnayrjgQ?diseaseId=N6XvFa1YP9CXYdB0kNSA9A&tab=2>.

12. International Travel Notices and Warnings, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Welfare:  
<https://www.cdc.gov.tw/CountryEpidLevel/Index/NIUwZUNvckRWQ09CbDJkRVFjaExjUT09?diseaseId=N6XvFa1YP9CXYdB0kNSA9A>.