

CORONAVIRUS RESOURCE CENTER

A Discussion Guide: Best Practices to Keep Your Business Running During a Flue or Disease Outbreak

Quick tips to keep your organization running smoothly when employee absences increase.

According to the Harvard Business Review, an increasing number of employees continue to work when they are sick. This situation ends up costing employers about \$150 billion to \$250 billion or 60 percent of the total cost of worker illness.

Plan for a flu-based business disruption

We have seen the coronavirus (COVID-19) take hold since the end of 2019. Information regarding this health crisis shows that transmission was not contained to the source in Wuhan, China. Every day, the Centers for Disease Control report an increased amount of confirmed cases in a greater number of countries.

Now is the time for businesses to review their business continuity plans or get serious about developing a plan. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that over 44% of businesses never reopen following a critical disruptive event. Is your business ready?

The tolerance for employee absence is unique to each organization but it is important that an organization identify what percentage of absent employees would create a significant disruption to business operations and plan accordingly.

Questions executives should ask include:

- Would the business function with a loss of 30% or greater of employees?
- If the entire business is operating out of one location, how will a regional, national, or global health crisis disrupt operations?

Find solutions to these questions to minimize business disruption.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Influenza spreads either through close contact with an infected person (standing within six feet) or through contact with contaminated surfaces. While it may be difficult to control the transmission of the virus, there are steps an employer can take to maintain a healthy environment:

- Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick. Ask them to return to the office only after they are free of symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Keep surfaces clean. Instruct facilities personnel to clean surfaces thoroughly.
- Minimize group meetings to reduce the potential for transmission. When group meetings are necessary, ensure that there is appropriate air circulation.
- Encourage good hygiene. Post signs in bathrooms to remind employees to wash their hands with soap and water by following [World Health Organization best practices](#). Place additional tissue boxes and garbage cans in strategic locations where employees congregate such as break rooms, lunch areas, or collaboration spaces.
- Encourage employees to get a flu shot. Offer the shot free at the office.
- Consult the Center for Disease Control's "FluView" for assistance in preparing for outbreaks of influenza.

[Contact your FNA representative](#) for more information and assistance on client communication on this matter. For more Coronavirus resources, please [click here](#).

DISCLAIMER: The information provided is not intended to constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon in lieu of your own legal assistance. In the event that you would like additional information regarding your insurance coverage and overall preparedness, please reach out to your local FNA Representative.