

Continuity Planning for your Business.

Steps to help your business take action to respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We appreciate that your business may be disrupted by the COVID-19 **pandemic** and your customers and employees impacted. We've put together steps and resources, that may help you to act at a time when you may have to make significant decisions.

The important thing is that you have a plan and some strategies in place, which you can develop over time. This planning guide is not expert advice, nor comprehensive. We encourage you to contact experts in your network, to help formulate a business continuity plan which is relevant to your circumstances, industry and business life stage.

Helping you plan and respond.

Simply stated, business continuity planning means making informed decisions about risk. Understanding the full implications of the risks you face, knowing your businesses' tolerance for risk exposure, and developing response plans for various scenarios are essential. We understand that creating and maintaining a business continuity plan can be challenging for many businesses.

To help plan and respond, businesses may take the following steps:

1. Identify key personnel.
2. Identify and prioritise critical functions.
3. Develop an employee communication plan.
4. Enable employees to work remotely from home safely and securely.
5. Consider strategies for handling IT infrastructure disruptions.
6. Keep customers, key partners and third parties informed.
7. Conduct preparation training with employees.

Step	Overview	Responsible Person	Due Date	Completed
1. Identify key personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider appointing a planning co-ordinator, as a Point of Contact (POC) to coordinate COVID-19 readiness activities and if possible, identify a deputy POC. ▪ Coordinate roles and responsibilities. ▪ Where possible, identify back-up people, if the primary and deputy POCs are unable to undertake their responsibilities. ▪ Identify key person risks by determining who are the people your business relies on the most. ▪ Where possible, identify back-up employees for key functional areas, should your key people be unable to undertake their responsibilities. ▪ Consider what you can do to minimise key person risk in your business, via process documentation or cross training. 			
2. Identify and prioritise critical functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify your businesses' important functions. ▪ Identify resources and requirements for business continuity for these functions. ▪ Identify options for maintaining business continuity, covering employees, IT systems, networks and facilities. ▪ Consider having conversations with your key suppliers to understand how they are preparing to continue operations in the event of a disruption. ▪ Identify who can make decisions to ensure your business can operate effectively and who should be a delegate, if the decision-maker is not available. 			
3. Develop an employee communication plan.	<p>Consider an employee communication plan to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the communication plan will respond to various scenarios (for example quarantine of work areas, employees having been in proximity to someone confirmed as having COVID-19 or having been diagnosed with having COVID-19) - what are the plans and what must employees do to prepare. ▪ How to confirm your business' status to your customers, suppliers, key partners. ▪ How and when the business will declare that it is ready to return to standard operations. ▪ Steps required to put into practice the business continuity plan and related communications. 			

Step	Overview	Responsible Person	Due Date	Completed
<p>4. Enable employees to work remotely from home safely and securely.</p>	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provisioning laptops and devices to enable employees to work from home, if practical. ▪ Encouraging employees to ensure that business files and applications are on the business network and not on personal drives. ▪ Reviewing your IT infrastructure to ensure that you have access. ▪ Providing access to cloud file storage where shared access to documents is required (using multi-factor authentication and encryption). ▪ Where practical, requiring employees to carry laptop and devices home each day, as quarantines and closures may be enacted with little warning. ▪ Confirming web-based remote access capabilities is up-to-date and internet service lines have enough capacity. ▪ Enabling different communication tools for your customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. ▪ Enabling and testing web and voice conferencing capabilities and ensuring employees have access and understand how to use these. ▪ Testing employees' ability to work remotely (for example by rotating employees to work remotely on selected days during the week to identify issues proactively in anticipation of a site closure or quarantine order). 			
<p>5. Consider strategies for handling IT Infrastructure disruptions to networks, servers, laptops and mobile devices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider how to re-establish productivity so that key business needs can be met. ▪ Consider what the fall-back plan will be, if IT infrastructure is unavailable. ▪ Consider what the recovery steps will be, if an employee loses their work laptop or mobile device. ▪ Consider what manual workarounds could be outlined, so operations can continue until IT infrastructure can be restored. ▪ Consider if you need to document and discuss within your business the impact of any acceptable outages. 			

Step	Overview	Responsible Person	Due Date	Completed
6. Keep customers, key partners and third parties informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take a customer-centric approach, and keeping customers informed about your efforts to maintain your business' continuity through your preferred communication channels. ▪ Develop and maintain open communications and coordination with key partners and third parties. ▪ Test the ability of critical service providers to support your business during a disruption. ▪ Be open to considering alternative providers that can help your business. ▪ Develop alternative processes (e.g., manual or in-house) to ensure continuation of critical business operations. ▪ Monitor news and announcements. 			
7. Conduct preparation training with employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use team meetings, webcasts or conference calls to share your business continuity plan with your employees. ▪ Check that employees understand their roles and responsibilities, during a disruption to your business. ▪ Conduct exercises in preparation for site closures, quarantines, health emergencies as well as public transportation and critical service provider disruptions. ▪ Check that employees understand how to access critical business systems as well as business and/or customer information remotely. ▪ Ensure your business continuity plan contains key contacts' details and call tree information. ▪ Ensure all relevant stakeholder and supplier information is available in one place, which is accessible to relevant employees. ▪ Consider retaining soft and hardcopies and distributing these to relevant employees. 			

If your business has been affected by the Coronavirus situation [we're here for you.](#)

Helpful resources

A list of some services to help businesses affected by COVID-19.

What's available	Where to go for more information
Australian Government Department of Health resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about COVID-19, including translated resources.	Visit: www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#for-employers
Australian Government Department of Health information sheet for employers about coronavirus (COVID-19).	Visit: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers
World Health Organisation Q&A on COVID-19.	Visit: www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses
World Health Organisation COVID-19 advice for the public: Myth busters.	Visit: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters
St George help for Australian businesses Support measures to help our business customers impacted by COVID-19.	Visit: www.stgeorge.com.au/covid-19 To find out more information and if you are eligible please call St.George on 1800 629 795
CPA Australia: Preparing for COVID-19 Detailed summary of tips to assist Small Businesses to prepare for the business implications of COVID-19.	Visit: www.cpaaustralia.com.au/-/media/corporate/allfiles/document/training/detailed-tips-for-small-business-on-covid-19.pdf
Australian Government: Business Resources for small businesses about business continuity planning.	Visit: www.business.gov.au/New-to-business-essentials/When-things-dont-go-to-plan

This is not a comprehensive checklist. Each business should consider their own circumstances and needs. We encourage you to speak to experts to help you to formulate a plan that suits your business.



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