

PANDEMIC PLANNING CHECKLIST

Owners of microbusinesses, sole proprietors, and farmers need to make sure they are prepared in the event a member of their business tests positive for COVID-19. Rapid response to an outbreak minimizes spread and the impact on business. Having a plan in place could mean the difference between continuing modified operations or shutting down.

The Center for Rural Affairs has developed the following checklist to facilitate quick and easy planning:

People

- Confirm and document contact information for all employees.
- Create a contact list of vendors, contractors, and key customers (name, company, phone, email). What do they provide or purchase? Are there scheduled deliveries or payments? Create a list of alternatives if a vendor/supplier is unable to fulfill their role. Conduct a [Vendor Assessment](#).¹
- Identify the central point of contact. In many cases, this will be obvious for small businesses, but reiterate it to the team to open the conversation.
- Identify others who know where the plan is located. (Is the plan printed? Is it digital?)
- Distribute and review the plan with the team.

Equipment

- Be sure there are enough cleaning supplies to disinfect all work areas, hands, equipment, and surfaces.
- Provide proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff.
- Compile a master directory of usernames and passwords (computers, phones, social media, digital keypads). Do not distribute unless necessary.

Sources

¹ "Vendor Assessment." PrepareMyBusiness.org, U.S. Small Business Administration, preparemybusiness.org/assets/SBA/vendassmtsba.pdf. Accessed July 2020.



Operations

- Walk through how day-to-day business would change if each staff member was suddenly out. Who would cover their work? What would need to be modified? Who could fill in? Is there anything only they know? What if vendors, contractors, or key customers shut down?
- Clarify and reinforce policy. What is the threshold for not coming to work? Should someone stay home if they have symptoms? If they had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19? If they have tested positive for COVID-19?
 - Reiterate that health of the team, business, and their contacts is a priority.
- Check the business' insurance. Call your provider to see what your coverage and process is in the event of an outbreak.
- Consider alternative business operations. Could shifts be implemented or rearranged? Which business functions must continue and which could be put on hold? If business involves working with the public, could hours of operation be adjusted? Could aspects of the business shift to be contactless?
- What procedures would change if exposure happens—could you add temperature checks, hand washing stations, ventilation, and/or PPE?
- Update your operations guide or training manual for any new hires or temps filing in at the last minute.

Be prepared

- Practice. Test out your response to an outbreak with a [Table Top Exercise](#).²
- Take the next step and complete a full COVID-19 preparedness plan.
 - Preparedness plan template for [small business](#).³
 - Response plan template for [fruit and vegetable farmers](#).⁴

Sources

² "Table Top Exercise." PrepareMyBusiness.org, U.S. Small Business Administration, preparemybusiness.org/assets/SBA/tabletopsba.pdf. Accessed July 2020.

³ "COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template and instructions." State of Minnesota Government, June 15, 2020, dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_business_plan_template.pdf. Accessed July 2020.

⁴ "COVID-19 Response Plan Template for Fruit and Vegetable Farms." University of Minnesota Extension, July 2, 2020, docs.google.com/document/d/12sLifH-6Dm48lm_s2OIM3rIrN54Fv_z_i52Mvy5yGA/edit#. Accessed July 2020.

