

RISK INSIGHTS

INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESPONSE FOR BUSINESSES

During an outbreak of an infectious disease, businesses may be shut down to help prevent the spread and flatten the curve. Restarting businesses after a shutdown or outage from an infectious disease can be complex. Before they can re-open, there may be required procedures and protocols that are put in place as new operating standards.

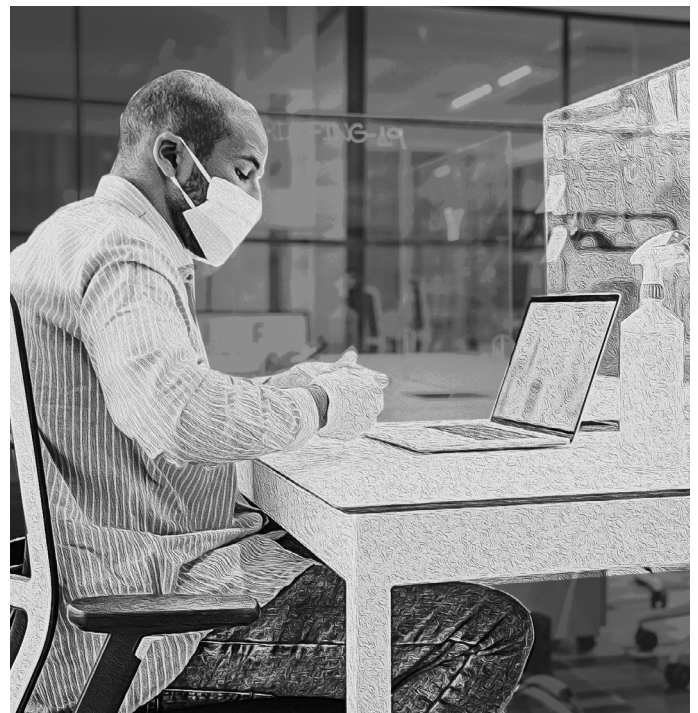
THIS DOCUMENT SERVES AS A GUIDE TO ENSURE INFECTIOUS DISEASE PLANNING FOR BUSINESSES IS CONDUCTED WITH AWARENESS OF HAZARDS THAT MAY HAVE ARISEN FROM A DISEASE OUTBREAK.

No document is absolute regarding potential changes; modifications in supply chain, production processes, and even changes in operating regulations could introduce new complexities and hazards.

Policies and procedures

- Develop an infectious disease response strategy and plan to identify potential risks to employees and take steps to reduce the chances of an outbreak occurring at the workplace. Post and communicate these policies to all employees. Communicate key points of these policies and control measures to clients and visitors.
- Update safety policies in accordance with any new recommended practices issued by provincial and federal health authorities.
- Conduct employee awareness training on preventing the spread of communicable illnesses.
- Sequence and stagger work hours and breaks to minimize the number of people working together.
- Maintain adequate staff redundancy for operational integrity in the event of an outbreak.
- Reduce the frequency of in-person meetings through the use of alternative communication methods such as phone, video chat, or electronic messaging. Use virtual training methods, when possible, instead of in-class training.

- Discourage sharing desks, phones, tools, and other equipment. If sharing cannot be avoided, thoroughly disinfect equipment using appropriate methods between users. Disinfecting with disinfecting wipes and sanitizer does not kill certain viruses, as some require soap to break them down.
- Instruct employees to avoid physical contact such as hugs and handshakes.
- Reduce or eliminate all non-essential business travel.



- Through policy, require any employee that develops symptoms of a cold, flu, or other illnesses (such as fever, dry cough, sore throat) to self-isolate at home and to receive testing.
- Create a contingency plan to account for response procedures, staff redundancy and for employee absence due to sickness or family care obligations.
- Update emergency contact information for all employees.

Physical controls and practices

- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace. Place emphasis on frequently touched surfaces. Ensure that disinfectants are used in accordance with manufacturer's directions, including necessary time-on-surface to ensure disinfection.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees, including disposable gloves, face shields and face masks.
- Dispose of used cleaning supplies and PPE in appropriate waste containers and empty containers daily.
- Review proper handwashing techniques with employees and encourage frequent handwashing with soap and hot water. As an additional measure, provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Practice physical distancing and maintain a minimum 2 metres separation between individuals. Provide physical barriers, such as plexiglass windows, where 2 metres of separation cannot be maintained.
- Set occupancy limits for staff and customer common areas, considering physical distancing requirements. Provide signage and floor markings to encourage physical distancing where appropriate.
- Provide contactless payment equipment at points of sale.
- Ensure HVAC filters are of good quality.
- Ensure HVAC systems are properly maintained.
- Replace HVAC filters with increased frequency. Increase ventilation rates of fresh air.

For more information on making your business safer, contact our Risk Services team at **1.833.692.4111** or visit us at **www.northbridgeinsurance.ca**.

