

Coronavirus: Practical Steps in the Workplace

As the daily reported confirmed cases of the Coronavirus (specifically the CONVID-19 strain) has continued to evolve and grow in recent days, the risks presented by the virus remain an issue for multinationals to manage in respect of their global workforce. Authoritative advice, which is regularly updated, is available from the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) - it includes information on the virus, how to protect yourself, FAQ's & myth-busters, this material should be promoted to all employees.

We have suggested below some simple additional steps which companies may wish to adopt to support their workforce as they cope with the anxiety of the continued spread of the virus and to highlight the corporate resources available to them:

1

CORPORATE MESSAGING

Due to the heightened anxiety amongst employees, communicating key messages and where support is available through the Corporate Intranet together with links from the landing page can help alleviate concerns. The key messages should range from where to get medical advice and support, through development of policies on home working and travel, to promoting key well-being messages linked to further advice and support. Having this visible can provide assurances to staff that the Company has a strategy to manage the virus.

2

LEVERAGE EXISTING RESOURCES

Wellness and health care providers are increasingly sending out communications on the virus, for example what are the common symptoms, and highlighting the services they offer in supporting employees. Corporates should ensure active promotion of the capabilities that their providers have but also identify gaps in coverage where other solutions may be required. A good example of positive leverage would be the promotion of on-line doctors services as a methodology of seeking clinical assistance without the need to attend physician offices or emergency rooms, which is in line with the current WHO advice.

3

TARGETED COMMUNICATION TO THE MOBILE WORKFORCE

Encourage those responsible for the mobile workforce to proactively communicate and to continue to maintain communications to this population. As many of these individuals and their families will be working abroad, they are particularly vulnerable and proactive communication can help them manage the stress of the potential pandemic and highlight to them where they can get more support should the need arise. Advice needs to cover the families in addition to the employees. It should be noted that evacuation for individuals who have contracted the virus may present significant challenges to corporations, so be careful of what commitments you give.

4 REMOTE WORKING/TELECOMMUTING

Where it is appropriate, consider the opportunity to let individuals work from home. This would also include guidance for individuals on the 'work from home' policy even where culturally this has been unusual. Where individuals are encouraged to self-quarantine this can help remain an active link with the company and help support business continuity.

5 TRAVEL ADVICE

Consider and communicate advice around corporate travel. Many companies are cancelling non-essential travel and providing guidelines on best practices should individuals need to travel. Organizations in addition may wish to also consider self-isolation processes for personal travel to infected regions. These guidelines need to be actively monitored to reflect advice from the authorities.

6 ESTABLISH A CENTRAL CORONAVIRUS TEAM

A dedicated team should be established to provide guidance on different corporate policies (such as homeworking, quarantine and travel restrictions) and to update these to reflect developments and guidance from the WHO or other experts. The team also acts as an escalation point for policy decisions and to monitor business continuity. A defined notification process of any suspected infections or contractions should be established and centrally maintained.

7 WORKPLACE MEASURES

Due to the nature of how the Coronavirus is spread, organizations can actively reduce the potential by providing disposable tissues, dedicated trash bins, anti-bacterial hand wash & information on cough and cold etiquette for employees. With the winter cold and flu viruses also prevalent at the current time, reduction in infection risk by simple measures will assist.

8 BEWARE OF SCAMS

The WHO has also highlighted stressed concerns over scams due to the Coronavirus. Criminals as disguising themselves as the WHO to obtain sensitive personal information and steal money. Employees should continue diligence in ascertaining the validity of any such requests for confidential information and employers should highlight the potential risks.

For many people the current impact of the virus is the creation of significant anxiety and companies can, by adopting a few standard practices, help reassure the workforce by highlighting the breadth of professional support available to them.

Should you want to discuss any aspect of this note further please contact either:

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