CONTROLLING THE RISK:
WORKPACE INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has seen the Australian business community drastically change how they go about their day-to-day business operations.

It is in the community's best interest that all measures are taken by businesses to limit the spread while maintaining usual business operations as much as possible. This has put business owners, site managers and supervisors in an unprecedented situation to maintain business continuity, while protecting employees, their families and wider community.

Consulting leading bodies, we've outlined some steps that you can take to limit the spread in your workplace.

1. Abide by Social Distancing Regulations, or Go Virtual

It is now regulation that each person should have at least a 4m^2 space in non-essential indoor venues. Although this is not compulsory for offices, it is advised that these provisions are still put in place. This may mean rearranging seating plans, implementing shifts or a "work from home" roster.
Prohibit or limit external visitors to your site as much as possible. Move in-person meetings online using one of the variety of online video or phone conferencing options available.

2. Implement a Strict Personal Hygiene Regiment

Implement strict personal hygiene procedures including hand washing and/or sanitising. Hands should be washed for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water regularly, including when entering or leaving the work premises or common areas, before and after touching the eyes, nose and mouth, using the toilet, and handling food. If water for hand washing is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be used.
Download our Hand Hygiene Poster

3. Encourage Good Respiratory Hygiene Practises

Educate employees on good respiratory hygiene practices, such as coughing into the elbow or into a tissue and disposing of it immediately. Reinforce these messages with appropriate signage and reminders.
Download Prevention is the Best Policy Poster

4. Regularly Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

Experts estimate that coronavirus can survive up to 72 hours on hard surfaces such as plastic and stainless steel[1]. To maintain proper hygiene, regularly clean surfaces, more so those that are frequently touched, with sanitisers or soap and water, including surfaces such as keyboards, phones, PDA's and keypads.
Download our Guide to Cleaning Work Stations & Surfaces

5. Limit the Sharing of Equipment Such as Tools, Phones and PDA's

In addition to regular cleaning, limit the sharing of frequently touched equipment. Reducing the amount of people touching equipment, limits potential transmission. If this is unavoidable, make sure that shared surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between uses.

6. Keep the Line of Communication Open

As the requirements of business and society change, it is important to keep the line of communication between employees and management as open as possible. This includes employees disclosing if they have been in contact with a potential case of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell themselves, and managers communicating new policies and procedures directly related to the spread of COVID-19.

7. Provide Personal Protective Equipment Where Required

Dependant on your industry, you are required to make all reasonable efforts to provide employees with personal protective gear such as hand gloves or safety glasses.
Download the ATOM Safety's COVID-19 Arsenal
Generally it is suggested that only the unwell or health professionals wear surgical masks to help prevent the transmission of the virus.

8. Isolate Groups of Staff into Teams

Be prepared for the event in which employees are required to self-isolate for a 14-day period. This may occur if members of your workforce come into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Splitting your workforce into shift teams and minimising cross-department contact may reduce the number of people required to self-isolate if the need arises. If possible, implement "working from home" measurements.

9. Enforce Screening Checkpoints for Staff and Visitors

Ensure the health of those onsite by implementing mandatory health screening checks before entry. Screening checks should include questionnaires regarding any recent travel or exposure to COVID-19 as well as temperature readings. A temperature reading of over 37.3°C is considered a fever, and should be declined entry to the site[2].

10. Implement and Respect Government Regulations

Keep abreast of the ever-evolving COVID-19 government regulations. Ensure you are compliant with all regulations that apply to your business, and actively communicate changes to day-to-day operations with your employees. Visit the Department of Health's webpage for further information.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19 visit the following online resources:

World Health Organization   **Safe Work Australia**

Australian Government Department of Health

Care was taken when writing this guide and this information was correct at the time of publishing, however the COVID-19 situation evolves rapidly. Refer to the Australian Government Department of Health's website for the latest information.

[1] World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses   [2] World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf

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