



**Special Communication to City of Burlington
Emergency Operations Center and Mayor
Regarding COVID-19**

To: Brian Lowe, Luke McGowan

From: David White of City Analytics Team

RE: Communication to Local Businesses

Date: March 17, 2020, 4:00pm

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Key Messages:

- Local businesses are key partners in helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 by taking active and immediate measures to protect employees and customers.
- Local businesses should develop and implement a response plan that includes objectives and measures that:
 - reduce exposure and transmission among staff, customers, and visitors;
 - consider specific measures to protect those who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
 - Anticipate disruption and plans to maintain business operations, and
 - minimize adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains
- Local businesses should regularly communicate with their employees and customers about what they are doing to respond to this outbreak.
- The City is working to identify all of the possible local, state, and federal resources that could be re-purposed or otherwise made-available to support employees and employers plan, prepare and respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019. We expect to have a working list available in the coming week.

Key Resource links

Business-specific Guidance:

- [VT Dept. of Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Food and Lodging Businesses](#)
- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [OSHA/HHS Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

General information on COVID-19:

- [VT Dept. of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak Response](#)
- [UVM Medical Center](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus 2019](#)

Important Note Regarding this Document: *The coronavirus pandemic, and local, state and federal guidance/orders regarding this pandemic, are rapidly evolving. Information contained in this memo is presumed to be accurate and reflective of the situation as of the date and time noted above. Information in this memo is offered as review of actions, events, case studies, and data based on specific requests of and research by the Analytics Team. The original audience for this document was the Mayor and members of the City's Emergency Operations Center. These resources are being made available in the event that they may be informative for other Vermont communities.*

Summary of Key Guidance Strategies

CDC and state-level guidance are recommending that all employers take active steps to plan, prepare, and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak by:

- **Encouraging, and requiring where possible, sick employees to stay home**, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and sending sick employees home as soon as possible.
- **Emphasizing respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene:**
 - **Wash** your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - **Avoid** touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - **Cover** your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning** – regularly (2x/day) clean and disinfect frequently touched and widely accessible objects and surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, restrooms, break rooms, reception areas. See more at: [CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#))
- **Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:**
 - Consult [CDC Travel Advisories](#)
 - Review [CDC Travel FAQ's](#)
 - Anticipate the possibility of recommended or required post-trip self-quarantine recommendations

The severity of illness or how many people will fall ill from COVID-19 is unknown at this time. Employers should plan to be able to respond in a **flexible** way to varying levels of severity and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. Things to consider as part of a business response plan include:

- **Explore extended telework arrangements and flexible work hours** (when feasible), and what necessary equipment, access permissions, and workplace policies are necessary
- **Evaluate sick leave and other HR policies** to offer flexible for staff who may need to stay home due to school/childcare dismissals or stay home if they or a family-member is sick.
- **Contact your insurance company** to understand your coverage for business interruption
- **Identify critical job roles and functions.** Plan out business operations with less staff or interruptions in functions. Consider cross-training personnel to perform essential functions.
- **Plan communication strategies** with staff and business partners to share information and updates, and to reduce fear and misinformation.
- **Consider providing delivery or in-home services** if applicable
- **How to implement social distancing measures, e.g.:**
 - Spacing workers at the worksite (~6-feet)
 - Staggering work and break schedules
 - Decreasing social contacts in the workplace (limit in-person meetings)
 - All break areas should accommodate social distancing with regular disinfection of all eating surfaces
- **Closely monitor inventories** of critical supplies and plan for delayed deliveries or availability
- **Consider cancelling large work-related gatherings** (e.g., staff meetings, after-work functions)
- **Consider cancelling non-essential work travel** and events.

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