

**Pandemic  
Response Plan**  
**Tier and Level Protocol**

## RESOURCE SUMMARY

A national or global pandemic can result in a sustained impact to normal life and business operations. While they do not occur often, pandemics require very strategic planning in advance as they may require altered operations for several months. From widespread business closures to a severe depletion of essential resources, pandemics will have a drastic and sustained impact on your operations.

This resource provides guidance on the essential questions to answer when creating your customized pandemic response plan, as well as recommended tiered protocol to support an informed response at your property or place of business.

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## PANDEMIC RESPONSE PROTOCOL

### PANDEMIC RESPONSE LEVEL PROTOCOLS

As you plan the implementation of your pandemic response plan, it is essential that you evaluate both the tier of exposure at your building and the community response level. The community response level is the degree of pandemic impact within your local community. The community response level will impact the restrictions placed upon your residents, employees, or customers. It is broken into the three levels outlined below:

<b>Community Response Level</b>
<i>Definition: Degree of community impact</i>
<b>Level 1:</b> A proactive response to a growing concern of transmission within the United States
<b>Level 2:</b> A reactive response to confirmed transmission within the region
<b>Level 3:</b> A reactive and urgent response to widespread community transmission

Consider the suggested questions on listed in the “Creating A Pandemic Response Plan” appendix of this resource in the context of each of these tiers and response levels. Outlined below are suggestions on actions to take during each response level.

#### **Level 1 Protocol:**

A Level 1 situation will have few restrictions on resources and business operations. The focus will be on proactive education and preventative measures.

#### *Employee Preparation:*

- Begin weekly meetings with management to review your company’s pandemic response plan
- Reach out to your local Office of Emergency Management and health authorities to gather information, guidelines, and additional resources to share with staff and residents
- Gather any updates to resident and employee contact information to ensure you have an accurate list for communication and update distribution
- Determine essential vs. non-essential personnel among your property team to evaluate who is needed on site and when
- Train property teams on the procedure to report any suspected or confirmed cases at property to regional and corporate staff
- Order an increased supply of disinfectant, paper towels, gloves, tissues, hand sanitizer and other hygiene and cleaning supplies.
- Encourage employees who are not feeling well to stay home and encourage good hygiene (handwashing, proper coverage for coughs or sneezes, appropriate disposal of tissues, etc.) with all staff
- Review and update information within your SecureCore disaster plan, especially the call list, media contact, and community resources for each property
- Submit any new user requests to support@securecore.com for any new hires not yet set up in the system so they can access the pandemic procedure and property-specific information
- Begin training team on Level 2 Protocol in the event it is needed

### *Resident Preparation:*

- Implement educational program to emphasize good hygiene among residents – share any handouts or pamphlets from the CDC or local health officials
- Inform residents who to direct their questions to – in pandemic situations, this is often the CDC website or hotline number (1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636)
- Increase common area disinfectant application practices – i.e. daily application of disinfectant to high touch point areas, such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, and bathroom faucets
- Provide personal hygiene supplies (ex: hand sanitizer, tissues, waste receptacles) throughout property for resident and employee use
- Provide information and resources to minimize fear, panic, or any social or racial stigmas related to the pandemic

### *Communication:*

- Communicate the Level 1 plan and proactive measures via email, phone, text, social media or flyers
- Post CDC flyers or informational brochures throughout the building. Provide them in packet form to each employee or resident.
- Send an email blast with preventative practices that each individual can put in place to help reduce the risk of transmission
- Distribute a FAQ information sheet to residents, employees or customers so they understand what the current plan is and what the next level includes if it becomes necessary

### **Level 2 Protocol:**

A Level 2 situation may result in increased staff absenteeism due to school or daycare closings, illness, or any travel restrictions implemented by state or local officials. It is likely that a strain on business operations will be felt.

### *Employee Preparation:*

- Continue management meetings but via an electronic platform, if possible, to communicate any suspected or confirmed cases and to discuss any implementation challenges faced (Zoom, GoTo Meeting, Microsoft Teams)
- Implement a voluntary remote work policy for employees who have the ability and technology to work from home
- Continue daily application of disinfectant. Consider engaging a professional biohazardous clean up company to apply commercial grade disinfectant or for application methods not available to your staff.
- Inform staff that a limited list of service requests will be attended to. Determine which ones will be performed – you may consider only servicing emergency requests. Examples of non-emergency service requests would be a malfunctioning thermostat or a dripping faucet.
- Cancel any group in person events or trainings. If possible, move to electronic platform such as Zoom or GoToMeeting.
- Begin training team and residents on Level 3 protocol.
- Require employees who are sick or caring for sick family members to stay home until they are recovered, even if they are not showing the symptoms of the virus, bacteria or contagion in question.
- Stay in communication with local health officials or emergency service providers to remain informed of updates, new information, and available services.
- Begin training team on Level 2 Protocol in the event it is needed

### *Resident Preparation:*

- Continue education of residents about transmission, symptoms and preventative best practices
- Close access to common areas, such as fitness centers, community rooms, pools, etc.
- Inform residents on what to do if they believe they may have contracted the virus or contagion. Calls should be directed to the CDC for required testing and management.
- Implement social distancing practices
  - Educate your residents and employees on the purpose of social distancing – to help prevent and slow the spread of the contagion. This is not done necessarily out of fear for the symptoms of the contagion but is instead done to protect our healthcare system and infrastructure from being overwhelmed or depleted of resources
  - Recommend to residents that any visitation be suspended to reduce traffic throughout the building.
- Communicate which service requests will be managed.
- Provide guidance on preparation to shelter in place if a Level 3 response is required. Residents should have several weeks' supply of essential food and household supplies.
- Continue to provide information and resources to minimize fear, panic, or any social or racial stigmas related to the pandemic

### *Communication:*

- Communicate the Level 2 plan via email, phone, text, social media, or any other electronic means. You may decide to not post or distribute flyers in observance of the social distancing protocol.
- Send regular updates to residents, employees, or customers to inform them of updates or any timeline changes

### **Level 3 Protocol:**

A Level 3 situation will have a sustained impact of at least a few weeks on your daily operations. Business and travel restrictions or closures will likely be in place throughout the community. Only essential or emergency services will be rendered.

### *Employee Preparation:*

- Communicate to your employees if the business will remain open and what their expected participation will be
- Require anyone with remote capabilities to work from home.
- Suspend any non-emergency or non-essential services
- Issue shelter in place protocol to employees and staff. Strongly encourage residents to not leave their unit unless to perform essential tasks.
- Advise residents that only true emergencies will be responded to.
- Determine what employee coverage at property is required and plan for safety measures for that individual.
- Stay in communication with local health officials or emergency service providers to remain informed of updates, new information, and available services.

- Consider having an essential services letter prepared. During mandated shelter in place procedures, only essential services are permitted to remain operational, and housing is considered an essential service. A pre-drafted letter stating that your employee is providing an essential service may be required if they are stopped by police official on their way to or from work.

*Resident Preparation:*

- Implement a shelter in place procedure for all residents and employees. Residents should only leave their units for emergency or essential needs.
- Inform residents that only emergency situations will be responded to.

*Communication:*

- Communicate the Level 3 plan via email, phone, text, social media, or any other electronic means. Do NOT provide any physical communication, such as distributing or hanging flyers in observance of social distancing efforts.
- Send regular updates to residents, employees, or customers to inform them of updates or any timeline changes

**TIERED LEVELS OF EXPOSURE**

In addition to understanding the pandemic impact to the local community, you must also consider the tier of exposure within each property. Outlined below are three tiers of exposure to the pandemic agent.

<b>Property Exposure Tiers</b>
<i>Definition: Degree of property exposure</i>
<b>Tier 1:</b> No known exposure to virus, bacteria or pathogen at your property/building
<b>Tier 2:</b> Suspected but unconfirmed exposure to the virus, bacteria or pathogen at your property/building
<b>Tier 3:</b> Confirmed exposure to the virus, bacteria or pathogen at your property/building

Each tier demands a different level of caution and training. It is crucial to evaluate the level of expertise and capacity of in-house staff or any third-party vendors who can provide the required services within each tier.

**Tier 1:** Tier 1 situations may be easily managed by in house staff who are able to provide any pro-active disinfectant application. While you may decide to increase the frequency of application, in house disinfectants and/or processes may be sufficient to provide the proactive peace of mind for your employees, residents, etc.

**Tier 2:** Depending on the nature of the pandemic, these situations may require a level of training beyond what your staff already has. Consider what kind of training your team can receive to help prepare them. Also be aware that the materials or equipment required for proper treatment of the area may be beyond what your in-house staff has access to. Consult your supplier for chemicals and other sanitization products to see if they have any suggestions. You may also consider engaging a company who is trained in biohazardous cleaning for their suggestions or services.

**Tier 3:** It is strongly recommended to engage with a professional who experienced in biohazardous cleaning and/or is certified in Infectious Control Risk Assessment. Any professional providing this service must have the proper industry-approved personal protective equipment (PPE), EPA-registered products, and the procedural knowledge to ensure required coverage and dwell times for any disinfectant used. Safety is of the utmost importance and a professional provider should have the experience, materials, and equipment required. This is to ensure not only the quality of service rendered, but also to ensure the protection of your team.

### **PANDEMIC REMOTE WORK PROTOCOL**

In the event of a pandemic event or concern, you may decide to implement a remote work protocol to maintain business operations while reducing the risk of employee exposure. Outlined below is a template policy that can be revised to suit the needs of your employees and business.

Determine who from your staff has the ability to work remotely based on work responsibilities and access to technology, such as a laptop, VPN, work desk phone or cell phone, etc. If possible, provide staff with the technology ahead of time that will support work location flexibility.

It is expected that employees set up a temporary workspace at home that is “distraction free” with the use of a computer, phone, and any other equipment required for task completion. However, employers should provide leniency in this expectation, as any regional events may close schools and daycare, and employees may be forced to provide childcare while performing work duties.

- **Schedule:** Depending on the pandemic level within your region, you may opt to have all employees work from home or put essential employees on a rotational office schedule to ensure minimum office coverage.
  - These days will be pre-determined, and the daily schedule will include set, non-compensable lunch times that must be observed. Providing set schedules will also allow for an office presence that is planned out and consistent.
  - Designate if there will be a required in-office day to work in office to complete any tasks that cannot be performed remotely.
  - Management reserves the right to determine which days will be worked from home vs. in the office.
  - Attendance at office or team meetings is required via electronic methods.
  
- **Hours Worked:** A workday from home consists of the employee’s standard in-office work hours unless otherwise pre-approved by management for ad-hoc circumstances.
  - If the employee’s typical work hours are from 8 AM to 5 PM in the office, he or she is expected to work from 8 AM to 5 PM at home including a non-compensable 30-minute lunch which will be assigned for work coverage purposes.
  - Any overtime worked must be pre-approved by the manager prior to working the overtime hours.

- **Management Discretion & Business Needs:** An employee may be required to report to the office at any point based on management's discretion.
- **Accountability Measures:**
  - A report will be submitted via email at the end of each day worked from home to the reporting manager.
  - The reporting manager will closely monitor any performance metrics to ensure the employee remains productive and efficient.
- **Communication:**
  - Audio or video conference software, such as Zoom, GoTo Meeting, or Microsoft Teams should be utilized for regular team meetings. This video call will facilitate team communication and support. During the call, the employee should report completed tasks, pending or incomplete tasks, and what assistance is required to complete their work for the day.
  - If a team member's workload shows excess capacity, the manager reserves the right to re-assign and/or shift workloads to the team member who has excess capacity to provide support to those who need it.
  - It is expected that any employee working from home will be highly responsive to phone, text, and email communication to/from any member of the company. If the employee is unable to respond in real time (ex: he or she is on the phone), communication must be returned promptly (i.e. returning the phone call immediately or sending an email stating he/she cannot respond for reason XYZ but and will get back shortly, etc.) and will be expected to be returned within 2 hours of the initial contact.

## QUESTIONS?

Please do not hesitate to contact us at [support@securecore.com](mailto:support@securecore.com). We are here and happy to help however we can!