

Week 2 Article

How To Prepare For The Coronavirus Work From Home Requirement

As the response to the COVID-19 coronavirus grows, and more organizations are having to shutter their public operations and avoid large groups at work, the need for employees to work remotely becomes immediate. For most of your staff, the remote location of choice is at home, but they can't always do that. This means that you will need to take a proactive and flexible approach to working outside of the office, and you should work fast. The number of COVID-19 cases appears to be expanding exponentially.

Your first step is to identify who can work remotely, who can't, and who should work on site if possible. The obvious step would seem to be that anyone with an office job can work at home, but that's not necessarily the case. You may find that compliance requirements prevent this, or security requirements won't let certain job functions work in unsecured areas.

After you've identified who can work remotely, it's time to survey their ability to work from home (or elsewhere) if required. This means you will need to determine which employees have a computer they can use at home, which have adequate internet access, and which have a location that is sufficiently secure for the type of work they do. You will also need to determine the ability of each employee to have voice phone access.

Be prepared for surprises, even if you have a business continuity plan. Mehdi Daoudi, CEO of [Catchpoint Systems](#), said that his company decided to put their plan to a test to see if they could implement a work-at-home plan.

"We have 250 employees," Daoudi said. "Everybody worked from home last week, and then we did a survey."

"There were a lot of etiquette issues," he said, "such as being on time, multi-tasking, and other productivity hits. We found technical issues, so we ordered equipment and now everyone is working from home for the foreseeable future."

Catchpoint is in the IT monitoring space where they track employee experiences, so they're probably better equipped than most to pull it off, but the fact that they were able to actually test their plan ensured that a mandatory work-from-home order is something the company could carry out.

Adding capabilities

When you run a test of your business continuity plan (which you must do when you see a potential disaster on the horizon), you're certain to find out that not everything works as you think it should. There will be employees who don't have adequate internet access, some that don't have computers that meet the requirements for your software and possibly a few that don't have an adequate workspace.

Daoudi said that it's the company's responsibility to make sure that employees can work effectively from home. This can include buying new computers, paying for improved internet access or adding a voice phone such as a VoIP connection for an employee who must use the phone.

Alastair Pooley, CIO of [Snow Software](#), said that in addition to making sure you have adequate internet access, you also need to make sure you have the proper number of VPN licenses. He pointed out that the number of remote users will expand when everyone is working from home. Fortunately, with cloud applications becoming common, fewer employees will need VPN access for those applications, but VPNs may still need to be available for users who need to have access to the company network.

Pooley also said that telephony can't be overlooked since it's vital to the functioning of your company. He added that someone has to be able to answer your company's main phone number when it's called, so provisions need to be made so that can happen. "We deliberately made it so people could work from anywhere," he said.

You will find out where your deficiencies lie when you look at the results of your employee survey. If you expect your work-from-home effort to succeed, fixing those deficiencies is imperative.

Helping your staff adapt

"It's a cultural shift," Pooley said. "People aren't used to working from home."

He said that this is particularly an issue with meetings using a videoconferencing application such as [Zoom](#), [WebEx](#) or [Google Hangouts](#). For example, people need to make sure their cameras are turned on because their body language helps make the meeting run better. Pooley also said that there needs to be an explicit agenda for online meetings, and someone appointed to take notes to be shared with everyone.

But such meetings only work well when you've taken the time to train your employees in the proper use of the software so that when they need to know how to use a feature such as screen sharing, they can do it.

What you may find, as some companies have already, is that working from home, once you get it figured out for your company, can actually lead to increased productivity. As was the case with Catchpoint, working at home became so successful that they kept doing it.

For this sort of success to happen, your managers need to learn to trust their staff to do their jobs even when they're not being constantly watched. Fortunately, there are a number of monitoring packages, including from Catchpoint, that can let you see what your employees are doing, even if they're at home. Now, you may have no choice but to trust your staff, if only because working from home may be about to become mandatory.



Mrs. Pam Sullivan and Mr. Land Folsom's Business Students

ARTICLE WEEK 2 ASSIGNMENT

Please read the attached article and then follow the directions below:

- Write a two-paragraph summary of the article.
- First paragraph should be about the article.
- Second paragraph should be your opinion and thoughts about the article.
- Then define three words from the article. Please try to define three words that you do not know.
- Please email your completed assignment or if you have any questions to Mrs. Sullivan psullivan@chesterfieldschools.org or Mr. Folsom kfolsom@chesterfieldschools.org.
- Our office hours are Monday-Friday 11:00-2:00.



Title of Article:

Date of Article:

URL:

Summary: _____



Your

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Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Plan, Prepare and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

CDC is working across the Department of Health and Human Services and across the U.S. government in the public health response to COVID-19. Much is unknown about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people, such as with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in China and some limited person-to-person transmission has been reported in countries outside China, including the United States. However, respiratory illnesses like seasonal influenza, are currently widespread in many US communities.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on CDC's COVID-19 web page.

Recommended strategies for employers to use now:

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.

Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

Separate sick employees:

CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:

Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.

Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.

Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.

Visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands webpage for more information.

Perform routine environmental cleaning:

Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.

Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:

Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found at on the CDC website.

Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.



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