Infection Control Moves at Workplace

OSHC, making reference to guidelines from CHP and some good business practices, drew up “7 Infection Control Moves at Workplace”. We hope this would assist enterprises in devising business continuity and preventive plans during the pandemic.

1st Move: Set up a Core Team to Coordinate Response to COVID-19

1. Keep abreast of latest development; be familiar with key preventive measures (particularly those for workplace); provide employees with timely advice (e.g. displaying notices at workplace and sending e-messages to remind employees about good personal and environmental hygiene).
2. Devise an overall plan on preventive measures (e.g. enhanced cleaning) and coordinate resources (e.g. surgical masks and hand sanitisers).
3. Implement administrative (e.g. video conference) and personnel (e.g. work from home or staggered working hours) arrangements to minimise contact.
4. Keep management posted; ensure all staff are familiar with measures and stay in touch with them.
5. Review and adjust measures from time to time in light of the latest development.

2nd Move: Flexible Arrangement to Minimise Contact and Prevent Spread of COVID-19

1. Implement work from home arrangement, work in shifts or in groups at staggered hours.
2. Implement flexible working and lunch hours to avoid peak hours and meal gatherings.
3. Advise all staff to wear mask properly at work and arrange seats such that staff could keep at least 1.5 metres apart (or add physical barrier between seats).
4. Minimise face-to-face interactions with visitors as far as possible, record time of visit and contact information.
5. Replace face-to-face meeting with video conferencing, conference call or online meetings.

4th Move: Know Employees’ Condition for Better Planning

1. Conduct temperature checks for employees and visitors at entrances; deny entry to those with fever, and advise them to seek medical advice promptly.
2. Set up and display “LeaveHomeSafe” venue QR codes for employees / visitors and encourage employees to make good use of the mobile App to facilitate fast contact tracing.
3. If staff have COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. fever, respiratory symptoms or sudden loss of taste or smell), they should refrain from work and seek medical advice, get tested under the instructions of doctor promptly, and notify supervisor. Staff should stay at home when waiting for the testing result and follow the household infection control advice.
4. Staff should notify their supervisors and the HR Department immediately under the following circumstances; at the same time, organisations should consider related work arrangements (including work from home) and testing requirements / instructions based on risks and work nature:
   - The employee or household member(s) is undergoing compulsory quarantine or subject to compulsory testing.
   - The employee or household member is being listed as suspected / confirmed case(s) or “close contacts”.
   - The employee lives in the same building of a confirmed case(s) in the past 14 days, or have contacted any suspected / confirmed case(s).
5. Keep in touch with employee who is required to undergo compulsory testing, after travelling outside Hong Kong or became a suspected / confirmed case(s) and remind the employee to observe relevant guidelines. Keep abreast of the latest situation of employee and provide support as needed.

3rd Move: Enhance Cleaning and Ventilation for Good Environmental Hygiene

1. Where possible, keep windows open, use fans / exhaust fans to improve ventilation.
2. If keeping windows open is not feasible, keep air-conditioner in good condition. Ensure the room is well ventilated by maximizing fresh air intake, change or clean the filter regularly.
3. Place doormats sprayed with 1:49 diluted household bleach at entrances and provide antiseptic products (e.g. hand sanitisers).
4. Empty garbage bins at least once a day.
5. Disinfect common areas (e.g. washroom and pantry) and frequently touched surfaces, furniture, etc. with 1.99 diluted household bleach at least twice a day (For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol).
6. Spraying disinfectants on people is not recommended as this could be harmful and would not reduce the risk of viral transmission. Use a cloth or wipe which is soaked in disinfectant to disinfect surfaces.
7. If workplace is suspected to be contaminated by the virus, cleaners should wear personal protective equipment (surgical mask, gloves, gown, goggles / face shield) when cleaning, for the dressing, steps and methods, please refer to Handbook on Epidemic Prevention for Frontline Workers (https://bit.ly/3R0kgx1) :
   - For surfaces or articles contaminated with blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta spillage, disinfect with 1:4 diluted household bleach after preliminary clean up.
   - Disinfect other areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach.
5th Move
Think Twice before Travelling and Gathering Take Precautionary Measures

1. Urge employees to avoid non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. Restrict or postpone business trips to affected regions (with reference to the Travel Advice of the Department of Health). If such travel is essential or an employee is already at affected area, he should observe guidelines of Travel Advice and take appropriate protective measures.

2. Reschedule or postpone any mass assembly in view of pandemic, e.g. annual dinner, annual employee assembly, etc. and consider replacing them with other formats, e.g. online afternoon tea gathering, online award ceremony, etc.

6th Move
Develop Preparedness Plan for Emergency

1. If an employee becomes a suspected case/confirmed case, or close contact, and he worked at workplace during incubation period:
   - Close the workplace immediately.
   - Arrange cleaners wearing personal protective equipment (surgical masks, gloves, gown, goggles/face shield) to clean and disinfect his work area and common areas thoroughly with 1:49 diluted household bleach as soon as possible. Enhance ventilation at workplace.
   - Cooperate with Government for follow up infection control measures.
   - Notify other employees who work at the same workplace and make flexible work arrangement such as working from home or staggered hours depending on the circumstance (e.g. nature of business, layout of the workplace, workflow); and require employees to get tested subject to the actual conditions.

2. Employer may take following measures to help employees manage stress and anxiety, and take rational approach towards the pandemic:
   - Provide hotline support, counselling service or set up a support team using instant messaging apps.
   - Provide useful and reliable information about COVID-19, including preventive measures.
   - Share positive messages.
   - Encourage employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle such as keeping regular daily routine and sleep schedule.

7th Move
Plan Core Services to Maintain Business Operation

1. Identify skeleton staff for designated core services with additional infection control catered for such posts. Arrange employees to work in different groups or work at different sites.

2. Provide necessary computer equipment and technical support to enable employees to work from home or other sites.

3. Take appropriate measures to support employees and be prepared for the resumption of daily operations.

Useful information

- OSHC COVID-19 OSH Information Pack
- Department of Health Travel Advice
- Hong Kong Government COVID-19 Thematic Website
- Anti-epidemic Guidelines for Frontline Workers

CHP Hotline
2125 1111 / 2125 1122
“Hong Kong Government COVID-19” WhatsApp Hotline: 9617 1823