

# COVID- CORONAVIRUS RISK BULLETIN FOR RISK BULLETIN FOR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE PREPARING RESUME OPERATIONS FOLLOWING C

This bulletin addresses a number of critical aspects of managing risks related to resuming operations specifically for manufacturing and industrial real estate following being shut-down or having reduced periods of occupancy based on shelter in place orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following represent best practices that support an effective risk management approach to resuming operations.

## RESUME OPERATIONS PLANNING

It is important to recognize that during early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, manufacturers or industrial real estate operators may have gone into shut-down mode or some form of partial occupancy under strained or hurried conditions, which is less than ideal. In some instances, operations may have halted rather abruptly or been discontinued in ways that the operator had never experienced before. There may have been equipment or processes that used to run continuously, now requiring a restart. There may be conditions of deferred maintenance due to limited staffing availability that now requires focus and follow-up. It could be that warehouse operations were asked to store a different finished product or excess of raw materials that completely changed the adequacy of fire protection features.

During the period of time for resuming operations, operators are performing a variety of start-up procedures that they may not be familiar with due to changes in staffing and social distance requirements. The combination of restart conditions, changed staffing

requirements and the economic pressure to resume quickly all lead to conditions where things may not go according to plan, and would benefit from an organized and planned approach.

Such conditions require a thoughtful and well-structured planned approach to address newly developing loss prevention challenges that present risk of loss.

Prior to initiating a re-start or resuming operations, structure the approach in a comprehensive safety review and planning session. Some areas of focus for such a planning session could be as follows:

- Identify operational parameters that have changed and those that have remained the same
- Identify any planned changes in operations following the period of dormancy
- Sketch out a process flow diagram that identifies raw materials storage and handling key pieces of equipment or components of the manufacturing process

- Identify points of friction or points of critical transition
- Identify critical equipment that requires regularly scheduled maintenance
- identify equipment whose dormancy may have led to particulate matter settling out of suspension or changing physical/chemical characteristics in other ways
- Identify finished product storage configuration and protection
- Identify routine maintenance that may have been forgone during the temporary operational pause
- Identify operational parameters associated with energizing equipment, conveyance mechanisms or process medium (air/gas, liquid, particulate materials, filtration)
- Review the effectiveness of the business continuity plan and revise as needed based on planning or changes identified
- Develop a list of actions required and individuals responsible for each.

## PROPERTY-ORIENTED ASPECTS OF WHICH TO BE MINDFUL

### Property Inspection

- Perform a thorough self-inspection of the entire site, including all buildings (internal and external), machinery and process equipment and external storage areas to detect and correct any unsafe or undesirable conditions such as damage, maintenance issues, improper housekeeping or storage, signs of vandalism, etc.
- Perform roof inspection when safe to do so. During periods of shut-down or partial occupancy, weather conditions may have impacted roof vents, exhaust ducting or air handling equipment. Water drainage mechanisms (drains) may become blocked or inhibited due to wind, hail, tree limbs, leaves, debris, paper/ cardboard, etc.
- Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures that may have lapsed during the period of shut-down or reduced occupancy.

### Fire protection systems

- Plan ahead to ensure fire protection systems are functioning and will be in service and will perform as intended when operations commence.
- Equipment may have been shut down resulting in impairment to the fire suppression system. All equipment needs to be returned to service in the appropriate manner and order.
- During shut-down conditions, testing and inspection of fire protection equipment may have been discontinued due to lack of availability of certified service contractors or lack of facility maintenance personnel on site. Fire protection equipment that has been idle or unsupervised during shut-down conditions may have sustained damage due to power surge and may not function as intended. Implement a protective plan for reinitiating testing and inspection of these critical items of equipment.

### Risk Mitigation Programs

- Operational staff returning after weeks or months to a facility following a period of shelter in place need to be refreshed on all aspects of the operations, including those that would seem more obvious were it not for a break in operations. When the workforce is out of a normal routine, it becomes that much more critical to review safety programs and risk control measures and behaviors.
- Risk mitigation programs should be reviewed in detail hot-work permits, fire protection impairments, forklift safe operations, flammable liquids handling, and lock-out / tag-out procedures.
- Reassess emergency response plans and team member responsibilities. Finalize a refreshed plan and communicate throughout the organization and regularly at safety meetings.
- Re-evaluate the business continuity plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic shut-down period. Finalize after making appropriate adjustments.
- Preparation of staff mindset and risk

## EMPLOYEES AND SAFE WORKPLACES

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following:

- It is strongly recommended that a business owner or operator appoint a "Workplace Coordinator." This person will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact in the workplace.
- Resuming Business Operations requires an operator and staff to ensure the following considerations are taken into account:
  - Confirm that flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices are instituted.
  - Ensure that the policies are consistent with public health guidance, employees have been properly trained on such and there is clear understanding of such.
  - Ensure consistent approach with Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's websites.
  - Make certain employees are connected with any Employee Assistance Program (as applicable) in addition to similar community resources. Be mindful that employees may need additional social, behavioral, and other services (e.g. coping with the death of a loved one).

- Talk with business partners about COVID-19-specific response plans. Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

### Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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### Essential functions

Identify and evaluate essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on services or products.

- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize existing customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Identify alternate supply chains for critical goods and services. Some goods and services may be in higher demand or unavailable.
- 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.

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