Pandemic Preparedness:
Operations Best Practices for Industry in Future Public Health Crises

FHCP

This document shares industry best practices based on member experiences and provides general information for food, health, and consumer goods manufacturers about maintaining the health and safety of employees while continuing safe and secure business operations during possible future pandemics and/or future health crises.

Planning & production

General Considerations

- ✓ Establish a Crisis Management Team (CMT) with clear accountability and expectations. The CMT will be responsible for decision-making and policy implementation across the business. Identify a clear point person to handle communication and coordination of activities.

- ☐ Remain flexible in crisis planning, continuously incorporate feedback to improve/adjust crisis management practices.

- ☐ Monitor for and consider regulatory updates and guidance (i.e. import, export, market access, labelling etc.) to ensure compliance and/or adjust accordingly.

Supply Chain Considerations

☑ Consider contingencies to prioritize manufacturing core items most critical to consumers, for example by categorizing product portfolio into priority (A, B, C & D) tiers and being prepared to filter as/when needed

☐ Revisit raw, pack and supplies stock holding parameters with consideration to risk assessment vs. working capital (revenue assurance vs. cost savings).

☐ Actively engage with suppliers and review their business continuity plans to pressure test supply chains. Include supply chain mapping within the scope of supplier purchasing agreements, and define counter measures to protect supply.

☐ Re-visit previously identified alternate/contingency supplier information in the event that supply from their facilities is deemed necessary; ensure appropriate verification activities have been completed prior to using the supplier on a temporary basis.

☐ Implement demand management controls – revised "pandemic ready" modified promotional SKU bundles (including DRP's); pandemic allocation % splits vs. normal everyday business; updated and monthly review of product demand profiles (exception based).

☐ Optimize end-to-end operations – full pallet ordering, where feasible; full truckload orders for all major retailer warehouses; pre-arranged drop trailer pandemic process/agreement with key retailer(s); if appropriate for a particular sub-category or promotion, full truckload DSD flow/routing process.

☐ Pre-establish daily internal operational alert boundaries and communication protocol/meetings for key areas including factory attainments, pandemic related site events, transportation (inbound and outbound) control tower principles and distribution center capacities, forecasts and throughput.

☐ Actively manage customer communication and procedures – monitor POS and DC/store inventories on a daily or weekly frequency; communicate internally and externally clarity on inventory allocation principles (%, time period, promo vs. regular business, lead times); align A SKU forecasts with key customers and clarity on allocation; review C&D customers order patterns and revise or optimize frequency and order size requirements; develop customer based pandemic trigger points, scenarios and procedures.

Facility & Operational Considerations

☑ Provide information tailored to employee/manager needs and job functions
For example, provide managers with tools and training to discuss hygiene/sanitation and/or managing illness with their direct reports.

☐ Develop employee and visitor screening protocols

☐ Move to work from home arrangements where appropriate/possible

☐ Develop protocols and set up quarantine procedures to use in the event team members develop symptoms and/or have confirmed positive cases.

☐ Install hand sanitizer dispensers (ideally, no touch) in high foot-traffic areas such as entrances, exits, and transition areas.

☐ Where employees are unable to maintain adequate distance (i.e. 6 ft or 2m) due to the facility and job limitations, consider installing engineering controls such as plexi-glass/plastic barriers, use of high efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation rates in the work environment.
Discontinue use of floor fans as they may create a focused blast that pushes air and the virus a long way.

☐ Consider more frequent cleaning schedules for commonly-touched surfaces and higher-risk equipment

☐ Implement a thorough cleaning routine in-between shift changeovers.

☐ Limit or eliminate unnecessary high-touch points, e.g. by establishing no-touch alternatives to punch-clocks and leaving doors open where possible.

☐ Limit or eliminate the use of shared tools, and discourage employees from using other workers' phones, workstations and other equipment.

☐ Use Health Canada approved disinfectants for use against coronavirus.

☐ Stagger lunch breaks/provide additional break areas to allow for social distancing

Policies & people

☑ CMT to develop (and ensure adherence to) a pandemic plan
key elements to include are:
- *Training and education*
- *Screening protocols*
- *Visitor management*
- *Quarantine protocols*
- *Business continuity*
- *Prioritize and communicate work streams*

☐ Develop protocols for actions to be taken if employee becomes ill or is tested for Covid-19, in accordance with provincial requirements.

☐ Maintain PPE inventory and forecast PPE needs; identify in advance resources/websites to procure additional equipment, if necessary.

☐ Monitor and forecast trends in job vacancies, absenteeism, and productivity changes due to pandemic measures

☐ If job vacancies, absenteeism, and/or productivity changes prevent necessary production, consider enhanced recruiting, as well as crisis incentives for existing employees

☐ Identify options to maintain key production activities with a reduced workforce, including cross-training employees to allow for continued operations.

☐ Implement strategies to reduce the likelihood of infection; in addition to physically distancing as much as possible, consider having employees work in cohort, staggered shifts etc.

☐ Ensure regular internal communication:
- *Establish emergency contacts and provide mobile numbers to all employees*
- *Develop appropriate tools and schedule for keeping all staff up-to-date on any new developments, including messaging from government and public health agencies (e.g. Public Health Agency of Canada Updates (PHAC), US Centre for Disease Control (CDC), etc.), as well as updates on company policies and practices.*
- *Conduct regular check-ins with employees to evaluate morale and have tools, information, support about maintaining physical and mental well-being.*
- *Ensure employees are aware of, understand, and fully comply with infection prevention policies and practices in the workplace and encourage appropriate measures to protect health outside of work*

☐ Stakeholder/consumer/customer relations
- *Monitor regulatory updates/changes and health advice at national and local levels in order to ensure compliance*
- *Remain in close communication with suppliers and customers to understand the impact on their businesses and consequently on yours.*
- *Closely monitor market and consumer reactions to help assess business risk and potentially identify short term opportunities to fill needs.*