

Coronavirus Outbreak

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With the ongoing international response to the new coronavirus outbreak (often referred to as 2019-nCoV), IMCA has reached out to our HSSE Committee and collated the following material that may be of interest to our Members globally in working-up their response plans. This information has been given freely and willingly in order to share ideas to help our membership during this unfolding health crisis, now categorised as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

It is recognised that there will be a wide variety of responses depending upon the geographical disposition of businesses and level of business intensity and experience in China. For instance, those companies with strong involvement in China and the Asia-Pacific region will no doubt have highly developed plans and expert knowledge well in excess of this Safety Flash.

The World Health Organization (WHO), as well as many national governments, are regularly publishing detailed updates on their websites. These are recommended to our Members for authoritative information and guidance.

Travel Restrictions

Many companies are actively developing travel restriction plans and updating them regularly as new information becomes available; some suggestions are as follows:

- No business travel to the Hubei Province, or Wuhan City the epicentre of the outbreak. For those personnel in China, restrict domestic travel to essential only such as flights to reaching international airports and no travel between Chinese provinces;
- Personnel returning to the workplace from China to work from home for a period of 15 days, implement a high level of personal hygiene regime, avoid contact with vulnerable people and crowded areas. Seek immediate medical attention if feeling unwell;
- Any travel to China for business-critical reasons to require a strict approvals process including medical assessment, or suspended altogether until 10 February and then reassess;
- Personnel residing in an affected area to consider postponing non-essential travel;
- Personnel on business-critical travel through affected areas to take sensible precautions such as researching safety briefing material prior to travel, restricting movements in the area, and voluntary confinement to their hotel room;
- No travel for personnel who are feeling unwell.

The Workplace

Consider the following:

- Establish a pandemic coordination team or similar body. Keep staff updated

- regularly through email, fact sheets, safety alerts, and awareness of new processes and procedures, new HR and safety policies etc.;
- Staff tracking processes and procedures for those on international trips;
 - Communication plans on good personal hygiene practices, frequent hand washing etc.;
 - Priority to telephone/video conferencing for meetings out-with the workplace instead of face-to-face meetings;
 - Developing working from home plans;
 - Developing instructions in case of staff illness with common cold or flu-like symptoms;
 - Liaising with local authorities, governments and health agencies for updates on local measures;
 - Research possible government plans for reporting, quarantine, and commuting restrictions;
 - Use of external organisations specialised in response planning and management such as SOS International, and advising staff of these resources;
 - Review of business continuity plans.

This is a fast-moving subject and may well escalate to the extent of requiring progressively more restrictive measures. Feedback from our Members that we can circulate to industry would be appreciated. Further updates to follow.

Recommendations

Members may wish to refer to:

- <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/novel-coronavirus-china>
- Country health agency advisory websites

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