

## Operations SOP – Health and Safety

Businesses qualifying as “essential commodity”, and thus functioning during the government-mandated lock down, face unprecedented challenges in continuing operations while preventing the spread of infection to and within their workforce. Besides adhering to applicable regulatory directions, these organisations must implement measures to ensure that workers reporting to duty remain safe and healthy.

Organisations are encouraged to adopt the following **risk mitigation protocols** to minimize the threat and re-assure workers that their safety is of paramount importance. These measures will also stand the Board and local management in good stead as being prudent operational and governance procedures.

1. Ensure that all workers report to work with full consent and knowledge of the prevailing conditions.
2. Assist workers with company letters for movement to the unit and back home.
3. Sufficient protective and safety equipment for all personnel and others while on site to minimize risk of contagion, with no re-use beyond the ‘use by’ date.
4. Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms of all personnel who come into the premises of the unit. More so of vehicle drivers, assistants, loaders, unloaders, vendors, suppliers etc. (“**Non-Company Personnel**”).
5. Ensure social distancing during work on site.
6. Ensure that the onsite premises are sanitized and generally provide safe working conditions to the workers given the heightened health risks.
7. Ensure contact of workers with Non-Company Personnel is kept to a minimum and is supervised.
8. Allow Non-Company Personnel access only to designated areas and sanitize those areas regularly.
9. Designate a safety officer specifically to follow these measures with submission of daily reports.
10. Establish an emergency control room managed by a competent and empowered person with high quality communication skills during shift hours.

While the above protocols should mitigate the risk of exposure, the threat of spread of the virus cannot be completely ruled out. In the worst-case scenario that one or more workers on duty are infected during this time, be prepared to react quickly to have them quarantined and treated and to inform district authorities. The following **risk containment protocols** may help avoid knee-jerk reactions under pressure at a later stage.

1. Instruct all workers (and specifically, the designated safety officer and those tasked with checking symptoms upon entry into the premises) to immediately flag any symptoms indicative of COVID-19.
2. If such symptoms are reported, instruct workers to quarantine in a designated area on site until transfer to a designated hospital can be arranged.
3. Identify the medical establishment where suspect cases will be reported / referred to.
4. Identify the ambulance service (as well as a back-up option) that will report for transfer of cases.
5. Quarantine all personnel who were in touch with the potentially infected worker and, in consultation with the district administration, trace all third parties who were in contact with the infected worker.
6. Immediately shut down the unit and declare it a no-go zone to contain further spread.

Operations during the lock down will be under close supervision by local officials whose reactions may at times be based on (imperfect) real time information or fresh directions from the government. Local management must monitor the changing situations and be prepared to take quick decisions to alter operations based on the rapidly-evolving ground level realities.

[BTG maintains all material on the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and legal implications here. Please click to access.](#)