



**HOW TO GUIDE:  
RESPONDING TO A  
CONFIRMED CASE OF  
CORONAVIRUS**



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### 30 MARCH 2020

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# HOW TO GUIDE: RESPONDING TO A CONFIRMED CASE OF CORONAVIRUS

As the coronavirus continues to spread all over the world, there is a very real chance that people working either inside or in partnership with your organisation will be infected. While your first and foremost priority should naturally be the safety and wellbeing of the individual(s) affected, the situation will also require careful management from a communications perspective. Below are some practical steps to take within the first 24-48 hours of a confirmed case(s) of Covid-19.

1. **Remember employees and customers are the priority.** The highest-need stakeholders in the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19 are your employees and/or customers. You should make addressing their concerns about health, safety and job security your priority.
2. **Activate a crisis management system.** If you haven't already established a core crisis team (see [SCENARIO PLANNING & RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC](#)), it is vital you establish a cross-organisational team of people to coordinate your response. This team should then take responsibility for:
  - monitoring external conversation around your Covid-19 outbreak
  - developing internal and external messaging
  - agreeing the regularity of communications and the platforms you will use
  - determining how you will liaise with each of your different stakeholder groups
  - conducting further scenario planning for if/when the situation escalates
3. **Be true to your corporate values.** What you say and how you say it is key. As well as being sensitive and empathetic in your response, you must also be authentic, reflecting the voice of your organisation and leadership in all communications. Messages that sound incongruous with your normal style are less likely to be trusted.
4. **Be transparent.** You should acknowledge your responsibilities to employees, customers and public health authorities. This includes addressing what you do and do not know about the confirmed case while being open and honest about the actions you are taking. Attempting to cover up or dilute the seriousness of the situation may risk lives and irreparably damage your reputation with internal and external audiences.
5. **Offer facts.** When communicating about the situation and how you are managing it, share only advice and facts from credible sources, such as the World Health Organization or a local public health authority. Speak clearly and accessibly, trying to avoid paraphrasing, particularly if communicating with people in multiple countries or in a non-native language. Instead, signpost them to information on your credible sources' own platforms.
6. **Do not stand alone.** While it is important to ensure any affected colleagues follow the right isolation guidelines, as an organisation or communications team the worst thing you can do is try to deal with the case(s) alone. Coordinate your efforts with public health officials and determine how involved they would like to be in your day-to-day response. Within your organisation, we also recommend leaning heavily on your legal, security and risk teams (if you have them).
7. **Be proactive.** As well as actively tracing those employees, customers and partners who may have come into contact with the person/people who have been infected, you should get on the front foot with your communications. Update stakeholders regularly, offering them the chance to ask questions and voice concerns. You may also consider asking key leaders to write a blog post or FAQ article for sharing internally or on your owned external channels, such as your organisation's website and/or social media.