

The logo for McDermott + Bull, featuring the name 'McDERMOTT' in a bold, sans-serif font above a plus sign inside a circle, followed by 'BULL' in the same font style.

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The main title of the document, 'HR GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK - CANADA', is displayed in large, bold, light blue capital letters. A thin white diagonal line is positioned above the text, and a white diamond shape is located to the right of the text.

**HR GUIDANCE FOR
BUSINESSES DURING
THE CORONAVIRUS
OUTBREAK -
CANADA**

MARCH 2020

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EMPLOYEE SAFETY + WELLBEING

Step-Up Workplace Safety + Cleanliness Measures

- Employers are required, by law, to provide a safe workplace for employees. Businesses need to take additional preventive measures to promote a safe, and clean environment.
- Emphasize the importance of hygiene and etiquette.
- Post informational documents throughout the workspace. Ensure employees are aware of how the virus is transmitted and what the typical symptoms look like.
- Encourage employees to cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Provide extra tissue and hand sanitizer in the workplace. Place in multiple locations to promote use.
- Instruct employees to clean hands often, with an alcohol-based sanitizer (60-95% alcohol), or to wash hands for > 20 seconds.
- Regularly clean surfaces in the workplace, including kitchens, workstations, and doorknobs.
- Provide disposable wipes, such as Lysol, so that employees can maintain a clean workspace.

Identify + Encourage Remote Work Options

- Consider remote work for all employees and establish a flexible approach, while ensuring business objectives are met and performance maintained ([A Guide to Managing Your Remote Workers](#)). Remote working should be encouraged when it is possible.
- Provide employees with the proper tools and training for remote working and virtual meetings ([4 Things to Consider When Encouraging Working from Home](#)).
- If remote work is not possible, consider staggered shifts ([Live Examples from Wall Street](#)) to limit the number of employees on-site at a given time. Increase the physical distance between employees.

- Implement restrictions on meetings and travel. Employees should be discouraged or prohibited from meeting in-person unless required.
- Travel should only be permitted for special cases, and only when required.

Provide Guidance on Work from Home + Leave/Pay Policies

- Ensure sick leave and absenteeism policies are flexible and adhere to public health and government guidance. Policies should be readily available and clearly communicated to employees.
- [A Guide to Managing Employee Sick Leave and Absences \(Ontario and Canada\)](#)
- [Legal Considerations for Sick Leave and Absenteeism \(BC, AB, ON\)](#)
- Employees exhibiting any symptoms of illness should stay home until symptoms subside.
- Do not require employees to provide a Doctor's note to validate their illness. Doctors are challenged with capacity limitations and the public has been advised to avoid such requests.
- Provide flexibility to employees needing to stay home to care for sick family members or childcare needs. You may need to revisit sick leave/pay policies and adjust based on extenuating circumstances. Many employees are having to cope with caring for others or their children during school closures.

Designate a Representative to Handle Employee Q+A

- Ensure the representative is equipped with knowledge and resources to handle employee inquiries ([Answers to Commonly Asked Questions](#)).
- See the above resource for information on a variety of topics including:
 - If my employees are laid off, can they work while receiving EI?
 - If my employees are quarantined, will they be eligible for EI?

- What is the work-sharing program and how do I apply?
- Laying off employees: completing the ROE
- If employees can't work because schools and daycares are closed, what should employees do?
- What are the obligations of employees?
- Stay up-to-date on Government guidance ([Government of Canada - Outbreak Update](#)).
- Stay up-to-date on employee support programs. As at March 20, 2020 - ([Government of Canada - Employee Support \(EI and Income\) + Business Support](#)).

HIRING + TALENT MANAGEMENT

Hiring, Onboarding + Training

- Given the uncertainty associated with our current climate, it may be prudent to freeze hiring until the business impact is measurable.
- Don't lose sight of recruitment efforts for key roles.
- Put in-person onboarding on-hold + facilitate virtual training sessions.
- All training and development should be conducted virtually.
- [How Other Employers are Responding to Hiring and Training](#)

Refocus Employees

- Revisit critical employee and organizational goals and objectives. Has anything changed, or does it need to be changed considering the current climate?
- Ensure changes to goals and objectives are clearly communicated to employees.
- Promote employee's success and effectiveness by ensuring goals and objectives are attainable given the potential limitations given the current environment ([Best Practices for Managing Virtual Teams and Meetings](#)).

- Communicate performance expectations. Ensure employees know what is expected of them.
- Ensure employees have channels to communicate with management and leadership regularly so challenges or issues can be readily addressed.

Re-Evaluate Employee Rewards and Performance Incentives

- Assess opportunities to provide non-financial rewards to maintain employee morale ([Employee Engagement during the Coronavirus](#)).
- Revisit and revise targets and performance criteria based on business current and near-term business impacts.
- Revise employee performance incentives once conditions begin to normalize.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY + COMMUNICATIONS

Plan for Business Impact + Assess Outcomes

- Evaluate the best and worst-case scenarios and assess the impact on human capital ([Harvard Business Review – Lead Your Business Through the Coronavirus Crisis](#)).
- Keep up to date on business and employee support provided by the government ([Support Plan for Businesses and Canadians](#)).
- Prepare for an increased number of employee absences — plan to monitor and manage absenteeism.
- Implement plans to manage and continue essential business functions based on anticipated absenteeism.
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions to ensure the business remains operational if key employees are unable to work.
- Assess essential functions and evaluate the community's dependency on your product or service. Be prepared to adapt business practices to maintain critical operations, so the community remains supported.

- Evaluate ways to retain employees without having to initiate layoffs. Consider 4-day work weeks, the work-sharing ([Government of Canada - Work Sharing Overview](#)), flexible unpaid time off, etc.
- Keep customers informed of business impacts, policies, and expectations.

Review and Share Information Regularly

- Communication is key ([How to Lead Through a Crisis](#)).
- Ensure uniformity in company communications
- Communicate the plan with employees and involve them in the review. Assess for any gaps.
- If any employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 ([Government of Canada - Medical Leave Guidelines](#)), the employee should inform the employer and company communications should be actioned immediately. Employees exposed to this individual should be sent home immediately and required to work from home for 2 weeks ([What Employees Should Do If Sick](#)).