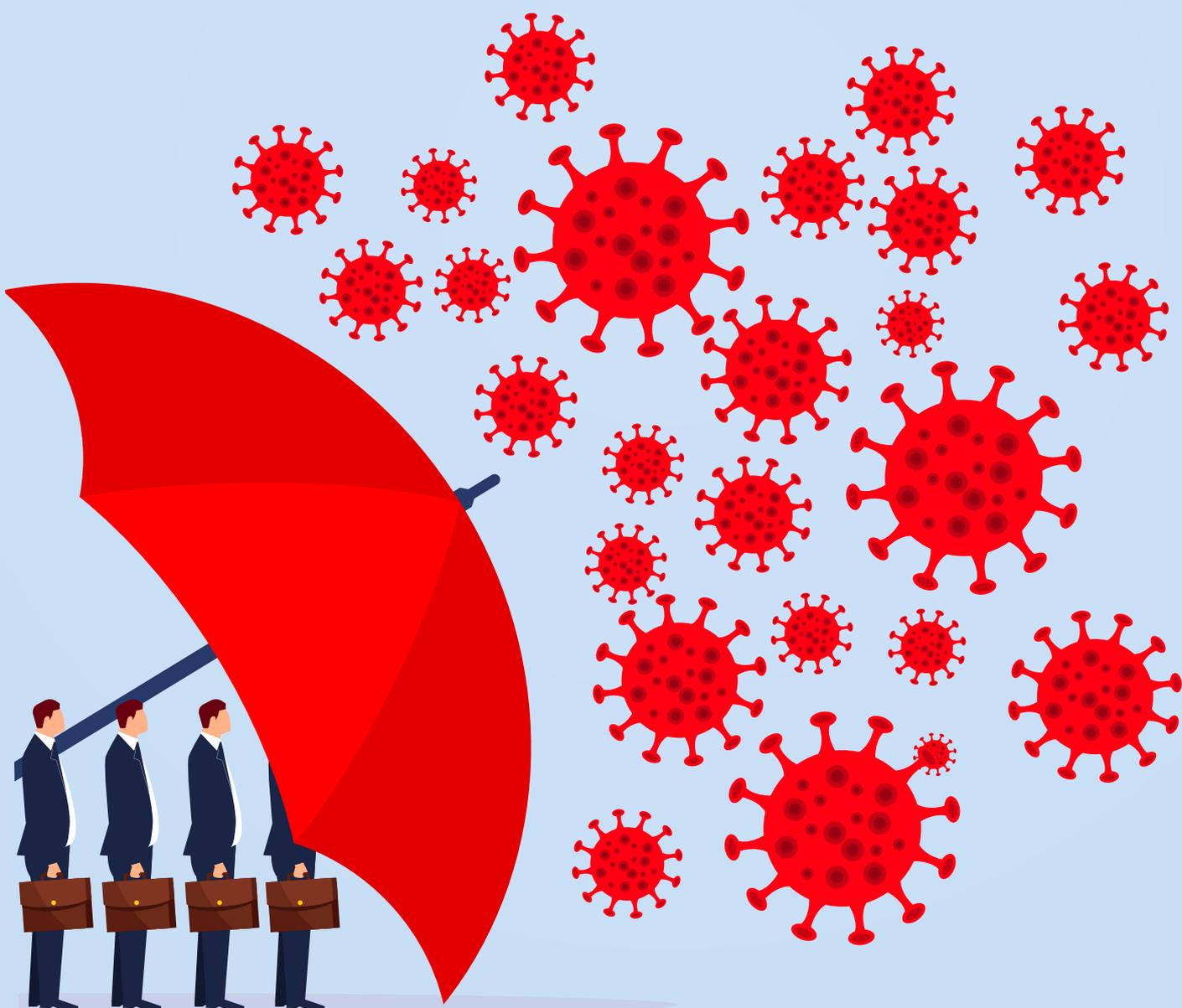




# A practical guide for companies about COVID-19 pandemic management





## 1. Introduction

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The pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which belongs to the coronaviridae family, a large RNA virus family. The virus first appeared in December 2019 in the Wuhan region of China and has since spread to more than 183 countries around the world. According to the WHO, the term SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2) indicates the virus, while the term COVID-19 (COrona Vlrus Disease-2019) indicates the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2.

The main symptoms of the disease include: fever, cough, sore throat, arthralgias, myalgias, diarrhea and difficulty breathing. Most patients develop mild illness. In the case of a more serious illness, the patient may develop severe pneumonia and need to be hospitalized. Transmission is thought to occur from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets from sneezing, coughing, or exhalation. An incident is considered more contagious when it shows symptoms, but it could also be contagious in the asymptomatic phase.

**The purpose of this guide is to provide basic guidelines that Greek companies can follow to manage issues that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as:**

- issues of their daily operation,
- health and safety at work for their staff,
- environmental issues,
- information security issues,
- emergency management planning.





## 2. Health & Safety at work during the COVID-19 pandemic



### 2.1 General

One of the top priorities of a company is to ensure the health and safety of its staff. Particularly in an unprecedented situation, such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic, employee health should be a top priority for any company.

The main obligations of employers are the following:

- Update the Occupational Health Risk Assessment regarding the risk assessment and the relevant prevention and protection measures related to SARS-CoV-2.
- Informing employees about the risk of coronavirus infection, prevention and protection measures, based on the instructions of the competent authorities.
- Consulting with employees and encouraging them to submit relevant proposals.
- Taking measures of environmental and personal hygiene, such as regular ventilation of workplaces, maintenance of ventilation - air conditioning systems and cleaning of surfaces, devices, etc., according to the instructions of the competent authorities.
- Supply of appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and supervision of their proper use.
- Implementation of the legislation related with COVID-19.

### 2.2 Measures to address the risks from SARS-CoV-2

#### 2.2.1 Organizational measures

Organizational measures may include indicative:



##### Commuting from and to work:

1. Minimize commuting from and to work by public transportation. If that cannot be avoid, the use of PPE is required
2. Use of corporate and/or private vehicles, with a maximum number of passengers
3. Avoid intermediate stops in transportation.



##### Attendance and entry of employees at work:

1. Organizing working time by dividing employees into different arrival times, in order to gradually arrive at work (and leave from work), to avoid overcrowding in the workplace, but also in public transportation.
2. Distribution of attendance in working areas by alternative entrances, where possible.
3. Avoid contact of workers when changing shifts.



#### Adoption of alternative types of work:

1. Work remotely, to the extent that this is organizationally and technically feasible, using information and communication technologies.
2. Rolling days for employees to come to work.



#### Examination of job change options and spatial arrangement:

1. Follow the recommendations of the occupational physician and the safety technician, regarding possible changes in the spatial position of the employees or the work object, where possible, and especially for people belonging to vulnerable groups,
2. Spatial arrangement of jobs, so that the minimum possible number of employees is achieved in each space.



#### Establishment of guest management policy:

1. Prohibition of access to guests into work places (customers, partners, suppliers).
2. Determining specific categories of visitors (e.g. employees of courier companies), depending on the criticality of the visitor's presence in the company.
3. Establishment of visitor entry rules (e.g. only with the use of protective equipment such as gloves, mask, etc.).
4. Receipt of products, from courier and visitors, for which are followed practices of removing the package and washing the user's hands.



#### Minimize of concentration and congestion:

1. Maintain safety distances > 2m between employees. Recent studies show the need to maintain safety distance of up to 4m.
2. Operation of groups and collaborations with alternative methods (telephone communication, e-mail, teleconference, etc.).
3. Adjustment of access to communal areas such as locker rooms, bathrooms, dining areas within the company, etc., in order to reduce the density of concentration of people in the same area and to observe the criterion of safe distance.



#### Minimize and/or transfer of travelling:

1. Minimize of traveling or postpone, as much as possible.
2. Travel prohibition in areas with confirmed COVID-19 cases.
3. Use of corporate private vehicles and not public transportation.
4. Preference for road transportation and avoidance of use airplane or ferry.
5. Any workers returning from a trip abroad must stay home for 14 days.



#### Cleaning, disinfection and personal hygiene activities:

1. Coordination with the company or cleaning staff to determine cleaning methods during the pandemic period.
2. Setting a weekly cleaning schedule.
3. Determination of disinfection actions in case of suspected or actual incident.



#### Distribution of work instructions and training:

1. Writing and distribution of procedures and instructions for managing pandemic-related issues.
2. Informing employees about the risks of coronavirus infection, prevention and protection measures, based on the instructions of the competent authorities.
3. Informing employees about changes to the Occupational Health Risk Assessment.
4. Use of information sources.



## 2.2.2 Personal hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Measures for the implementation of good personal hygiene practices in the workplace can be the following:

- Avoid approaching people with symptoms of a respiratory infection.
- Application of proper personal hygiene practices (hands, respiratory secretions, etc.) by employees, providing appropriate cleaning and disinfection equipment, as well as trash bags.
- Provision of antiseptic solutions (in the form of liquid, foam, gel, wipes) to employees and placing appropriate antiseptic with infusion pump and base for the hands at the exits/entrances and in the communal areas of the company.
- Avoid consuming any kind of food in the workplace, except of dining areas.
- Disposal and installation of bins with a foot-covered lid and a garbage bag, where disposable PPE is discarded, as well as wipes, disposable paper towels or other means used to disinfect surfaces or objects in the workplace.
- Provision of appropriate PPE and training of employees for the safe use and supervision of the right use of it.
- Frequent self-control of employees for any fever.

## Personal hygiene instructions

- Avoid contact of hands with eyes, nose and mouth to reduce the risk of infection with the virus.
- Avoid sharing pencils, pens, markers and other personal items.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover the nose and mouth with the sleeve at elbow height or with a tissue (Figure 1).
- Used paper towels should be disposed immediately after use in trash cans.
- Regular hand washing of workers and visitors with liquid soap and water for at least 20 seconds (Figure 2)
- This is followed by careful drying of the hands with disposable paper towels that will be disposed in the bin.
- Avoid close contact (<2m) for more than 15 minutes with people who have symptoms of cough, sneezing or fever.
- Employees and visitors may alternatively use an antiseptic alcoholic solution (containing at least 70% alcohol) or alcohol wipes. It is recommended to rub your hands well until the antiseptic dries. The bottle with the antiseptic liquid (with infusion pump and base) must be in a clear position at the entrance of each floor.
- Hands must be washed thoroughly before eating.



Figure 1

# Washing of hands

Daily activities in which we should apply hand hygiene by washing our hands with soap and water:

- Before, during and after food preparation.
- Before taking a meal.
- Before and after care a patient who develops vomiting or diarrhea or respiratory symptoms.
- Before and after wound care.
- After using the toilet.
- After changing diapers or cleaning a child who has used the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing.
- After contact with animal, animal feed or animal waste.
- After handling food for pets.
- After contact with waste.
- After contact with a person with respiratory symptoms.
- After contact with any surface possibly contaminated.

Follow these steps when washing your hands with soap and water:



Figure 2

# Use of antiseptic solution

- Use an antiseptic solution (with at least 70% alcohol) when you can't wash your hands with soap and water.
- Using the antiseptic solution can very quickly reduce the number of germs on our hands.
- The antiseptic solution is not as effective when the hands are visibly soiled.
- The antiseptic solution is not as effective for all germs.

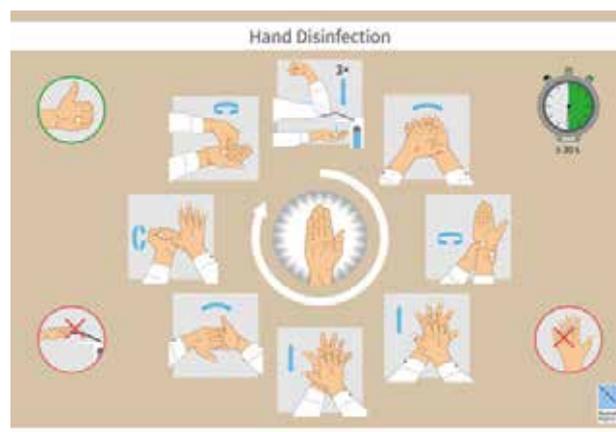


Figure 3

Employees with one or more of the following symptoms, such as fever, cough, sore throat, should follow the instructions of Hellenic National Public Health Organization or the competent authorities of the country where the company is placed.

①

We inform our employer or service

②

We contact our treating physician

③

Contact the competent authorities of the country where the company is placed.

## Personal protection measures

The option of applying additional personal protective measures, such as gloves or a mask, is completely complementary and should not replace the need to apply other recommended protective measures that are more susceptible to reduce the risk of transmitting Sars-CoV2 (keeping a distance of 2 meters), from other people, avoiding congestion indoors, regular hand hygiene (either with soap and water or an alcoholic solution) and avoiding contact of the hands (with or without gloves) with the face.

## Standard surgical mask

Standard surgical mask is medical equipment, is not only a PPE and is manufactured according to the standard EN 14683, after corresponding checks.

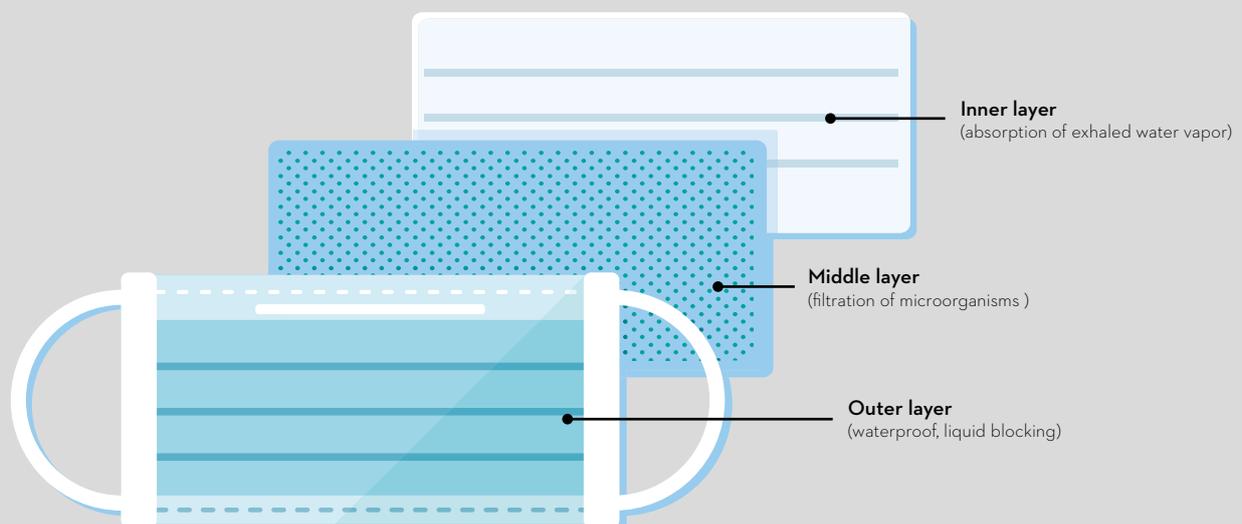
Standard surgical mask is a natural barrier to fluids and large droplets of respiration. Properly use, it will protect from respiratory diseases which are contaminated with respiratory droplets.

**Standard surgical mask should be applied:**

- in any case of a respiratory system infection
- in any case of care of a patient with a respiratory infection
- in any case of visiting health care facilities during a pandemic or the peak of seasonal flu

### Description of the layers of standard surgical mask

- The outer layer of the mask is colored and repels liquids so that in the event of blood or other biological fluids they do not enter the upper respiratory tract. If this side is placed inwards, the water vapor produced by the exhalation remains on it and creates a feeling of suffocation.
- The inner layer is white and aims to absorb the water vapor of exhalation.
- The filtration of microorganisms is done from the middle layer which is not visible.



### Instructions for applying a standard surgical mask

- Application of hand hygiene before applying the mask.
- Apply the mask on the face so that it completely covers the nose, mouth and chin (firmly, without gaps) pressure of the metal element to the bridge of the nose.
- Locking with cords in the middle of the back of the head and neck. If it is a mask with elastic loops, they are applied around the ears.
- Avoid contact of the mask after placement, otherwise apply hand hygiene before and after contact.



Figure 5

### Instructions for removing a standard surgical mask

- Removing the mask by grasping only the laces first from below and then from above. If it is a mask with elastic loops, it is removed by holding the loops at the same time. Do not grab the mask from the fabric part.
- Dumping in the trash can.
- Application of hand hygiene.
- Avoid reusing the mask (it is for single use only).
- Removal, disposal and change in the event that it is contaminated or damaged.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

# Gloves

Although the use of gloves is recommended by many workplaces, in order to prevent the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2, **hand hygiene before and after the use of gloves is essential.**

In addition, it should be noted that gloves are damaged easily, both during use and from alcoholic solutions. In case of wear or prolonged use, they should be properly disposed and perform hand hygiene and, if necessary, a new pair of gloves should use.

## How to apply gloves:

- Choose the right type and size.
- Insert your hands into the gloves and carefully stretch up to the wrists without tearing.
- Do not touch the face when wearing gloves.
- Do not touch other protective equipment materials when wearing gloves.
- Remove gloves if torn.
- Wash your hands before applying a new pair of gloves.
- Minimize the surfaces and objects you touch.

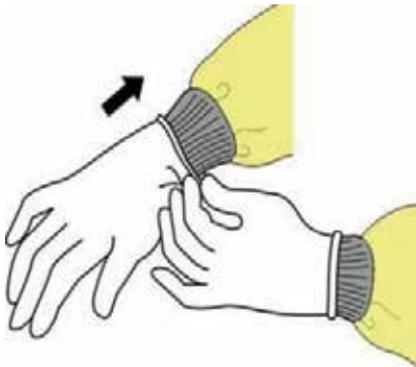


Figure 9

## Safe glove removal:

- Grab the outer part of the glove which is near the wrist.
- Pull out the glove, turning the inside-out at the same time.
- Hold it with the other hand that still has the glove.
- Insert the finger of the hand that does not have a glove, under the glove of the other hand at the point of the wrist.
- Pull from the inside out, creating a bag for both gloves.
- Throw the gloves in the covered trash can.

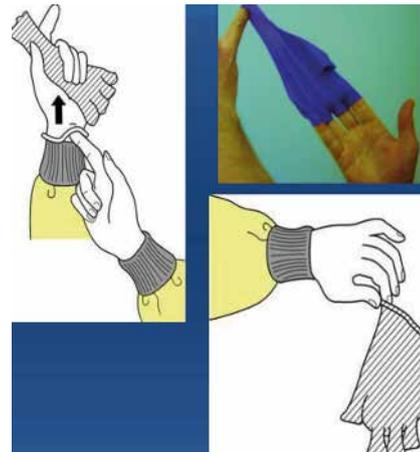


Figure 10



### 2.2.3 Measures related to the work environment

## General measures

It is estimated that SARS-CoV-2 can survive for several days in the environment on different surfaces. Control measures against the spread of the virus in the work environment include:

- Adequate ventilation of workplaces and regular maintenance of ventilation - air conditioning systems.
- Systematic cleaning of work areas and surfaces, work equipment as well as tools, devices and objects used (knobs, remote controls, switches, telephones, keyboards, etc.).
- The systematic cleaning of communal areas such as locker rooms, bathrooms, dining areas, etc.
- Disinfection by spraying (with approved products) of areas where a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection has been identified.
- Disposal and installation of covered waste bins, where disposable PPE is discarded, as well as disposable paper towels, wet antiseptic tissues or other means used to disinfect work surfaces, as well as personal hygiene items.
- The frequent cleaning of work clothes (overalls, aprons, etc.), as well as the PPE provided (helmets, glasses, hearing aids, boots, etc.).

## Cleaning and disinfection of workplaces

Cleaning the workplace is important to prevent the spread of the virus and includes the following:

- Systematic and proper cleaning with the usual procedure (use of detergent, water and mechanical friction) and disinfection of surfaces and objects in the workplace.
- Use 0.5% sodium hypochlorite (dilution 1:10 if 5% home chlorine is used or 5,000 ppm equivalent if tablets are used) after cleaning with neutral detergent.
- For surfaces that may be damaged by the use of sodium hypochlorite, ethanol concentration of 70% may be used after cleaning with neutral detergent, but always taking into account the manufacturer's instructions for the compatibility of the material with the antimicrobial agent to be used.
- Use of appropriate PPE when performing disinfection work.
- Rejected equipment should be treated as potential contaminants and discarded in accordance with national law.
- If non-disposable protective equipment is used, it must be disinfected with appropriate disinfectants (e.g. 0.1% sodium hypochlorite or 70% ethanol) after each use.
- In case other disinfectants are used, the manufacturer's instructions must be followed.
- When using disinfectants, the space must be well ventilated.
- In the case of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, the usual procedures for disinfection and / or disposal of PPE, tools, etc. must be followed.
- The area where the employee remained must be cleaned and disinfected, after his departure, by the cleaning staff, according to the instructions of the competent authorities.

## 2.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In case of cleaning of suspected contaminated surfaces or contact with a suspicious or confirmed case, the use of the following PPE is recommended:

- Masks of high respiratory protection FFP2 or FFP3
- Protective glasses
- Protective form, waterproof, with long sleeves, disposable
- Single use gloves.
- In any other case, standard surgical masks and disposable gloves can provide adequate protection.
- Gloves must be safely removed as described above.





### 3. Waste management during the pandemic

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Basic rules for environmental protection during a pandemic are as follows:

- Disposable gloves, masks and wipes are not recycled, so they are not placed in the blue (recycle) bin.
- Gloves, masks, disposable wipes and other contaminated waste are collected in garbage bags, which are closed as best as possible.
- These bags are only discarded in the green or gray bin (depending on the municipality of the city of Greece or the country where the company is placed) and the lid of the bin must remain closed.
- It is forbidden to discard gloves, masks and wet tissues in the sewers.
- Bags should not be left out of the bins. If the bucket is full, then they must be placed to another one.
- Bulky objects, prunings, construction waste, excavations and demolition should not be left on the streets or outside the bins, without consultation with the municipality or with a collection and transport company, for their receipt.
- Avoid work that creates such waste.
- In case of patient waste, they are discarded in a separate bag and in a closed container and not in the recycling bins.
- The bag containing such waste must be tightly closed, in a second garbage bag, which is tied just as tightly.
- The second bag is not overfilled, and the waste must not be compressed by hand, in order to avoid any diffusion.
- All safety precautions are taken when cleaning and sanitation.
- We continue to recycle other recyclable materials as before.
- We fill the mixed waste bags until 2/3.



## 4. Practical information security advice and Telework

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Business challenges arising from emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, require preparation and response to the new conditions.

Companies are called upon to change their habits and ways of working in order to respond appropriately to an unexpected event that may affect them, in order to reduce the possible effects that will arise and to ensure their Business Continuity.

The most important change that takes place in the days of the pandemic is the mass application, by organizations and companies, of Teleworking or remote work to protect employees, to slow down the spread of coronavirus and at the same time to continue the business operation of the company.

However, working with laptops or tablets and remote access to the corporate network, in addition to new features, also created problems. The first problem is purely functional and concerns the increased demands on IT departments to serve many users who must be simultaneously remotely connected while many users must be trained in the use of new tools and integrate the new way in their daily work culture.

The biggest problem is the risk and threat to the security of information and the loss of corporate data either from the mistake of users who are not properly trained and informed in data protection and information or from the existence of reduced cybersecurity measures that give the opportunity to malicious users to exploit corporate security gaps.

Each company applies different Teleworking approaches, but the most common practice is to use VPN (Virtual Private Network) where data passes through the corporate network and is processed at remote workstations.

Companies should take the necessary measures to protect and mitigate the risks that may affect their information systems.

### **Practical information and cyber security recommendations:**

- Recommendations for employers.
- Recommendations for staff.
- Appropriate use of technologies and devices during Teleworking.

### **Recommendations for employers:**

- Define and implement specific procedures for Teleworking. These procedures must consider the nature and severity of the risks, arising from remote working, associated with the protection of corporate data.
- Inform and train the staff in the new Teleworking processes and in the appropriate use of the technologies that support Teleworking.
- Ensure that any processing of staff data in the context of teleworking is in compliance with the EU legal framework on data protection.
- Ensure that the corporate VPN solution scales and is able to sustain a large number of simultaneous connections.
- Ensure that all the corporate business applications must be accessible only via secure communication channels provided by corporate VPN.
- Access to the company's critical applications or servers should be safeguarded using multifactor authentication mechanisms.
- Provide where possible corporate laptops/computers/tablets to staff while on Teleworking because this method ensures that all Teleworking devices have up-to-date security software and security patch levels.
- Personal laptops/computers/tablets must be vetted from the security standpoint using NAC (Network Admission Control) or NAP (Network Access Protection) technologies in order to control potential risks.
- Ensure that adequate IT resources are in place to support staff in case of technical issues in new technologies.

### **Recommendations for staff:**

- Use corporate (rather than personal) laptops/computers/tablets where possible. Otherwise personal Teleworking devices, operating system and applications must have up-to-date security software and security patch levels. Furthermore, appropriate Antivirus/Antimalware software must be installed and should also be fully updated.
- Do not use the Teleworking devices provided by the company in the context of Teleworking for both work and leisure activities.
- Do not share the Teleworking devices provided by the company in the context of Teleworking with other family members.
- Lock your screen if you work in a shared space and store Teleworking devices in a secure location to prevent from loss or theft when you are not working.
- Set strong passwords to protect the Teleworking devices.
- Connect to the Internet via secure networks (avoid open/free Wi-Fi).
- Avoid the exchange of sensitive corporate information, during Teleworking, following the corporate security procedures.
- Avoid using online storage services (e.g. Dropbox, One Drive, Google Drive) unless provided with appropriate security measures and data storage is properly encrypted.
- Do not share the virtual meeting URLs on social media or other public channels.

### **Appropriate use of technologies and devices during Teleworking:**

- Be very suspicious and do not open links or attachments received by email from senders you do not know.
- Do not send personal information or passwords to recipients, after email request, that looks like secure senders (ministries, health agencies, banks, telecommunications providers).
- Inform company and your IT department in case that unusual or suspicious activity is detected using Teleworking devices.



## 5. Contingency Plan for a pandemic



The Contingency Plan is an emergency plan designed to deal with situations other than expected. It is often used for risk assessment for an extreme risk that, although is unlikely to occur, will have very devastating consequences if it does occur. Figure 11 shows the steps to be followed by the company to draw up such a plan.

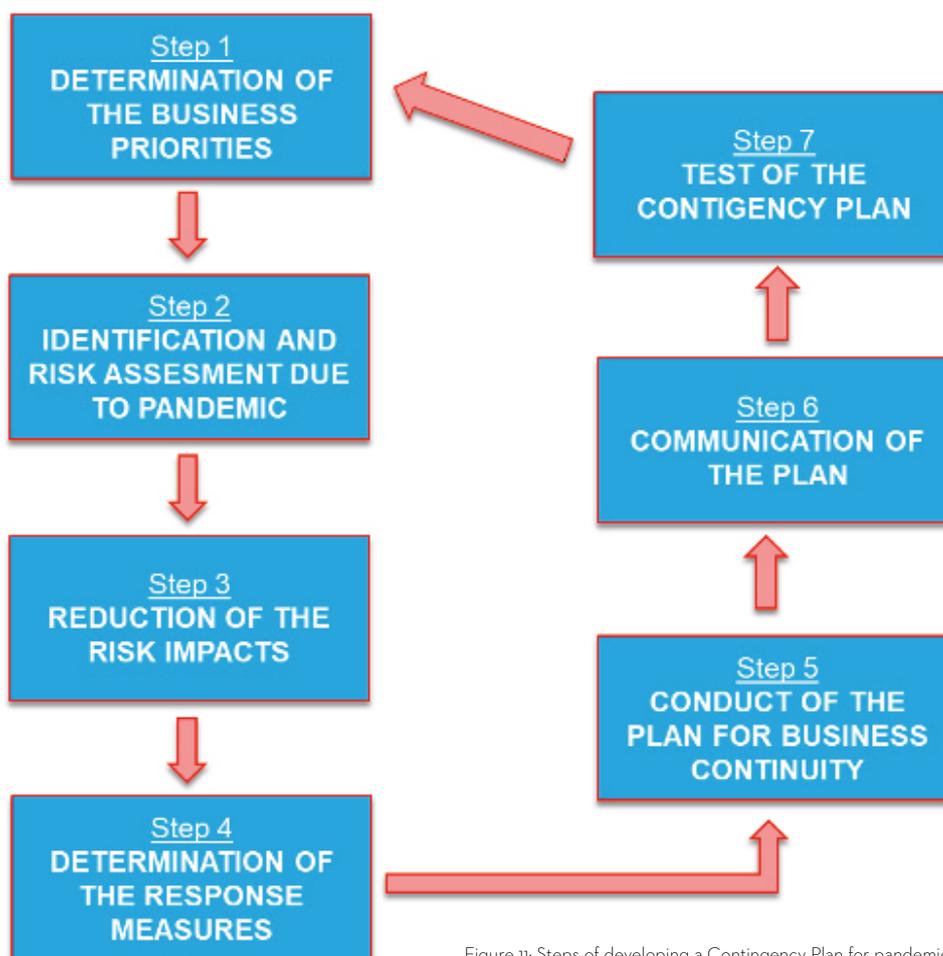
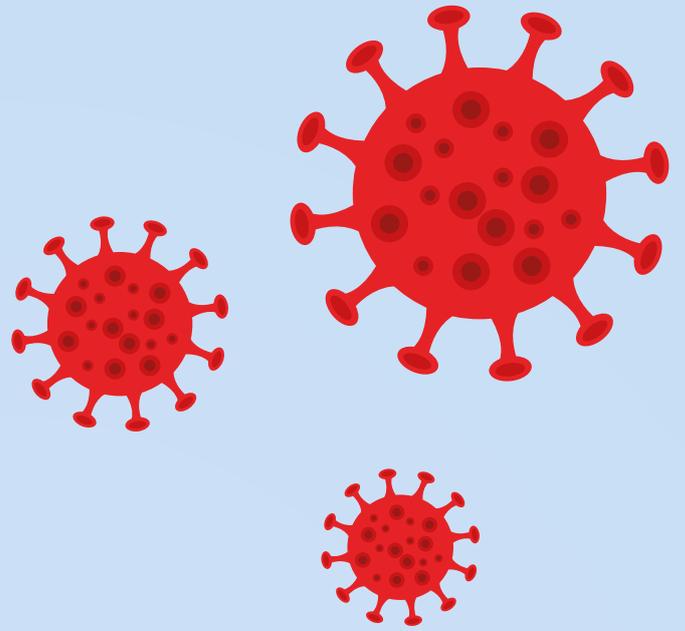


Figure 11: Steps of developing a Contingency Plan for pandemics

### Sources of information

1. Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety - [www.elinyae.gr/](http://www.elinyae.gr/)
2. World Health Organization (WHO) - <https://www.who.int/>
3. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work - <https://osha.europa.eu/el>
4. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov>
5. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en>
6. European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) - <https://www.enisa.europa.eu/topics/WFH-COVID19/tips-for-cybersecurity-when-working-from-home>
7. Cyber Crime Division - <https://cyberalert.gr/>
8. Hellenic Data Protection Authority - <https://www.dpa.gr/>



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