

Staffing Concerns and Challenges

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has warned that businesses should prepare for the possible impact of COVID-19 on operations, specifically staffing issues.

The CDC has urged businesses to consider the impact on overall operations if a large number of employees are ill and/or unable to report to work.

“Plan for worker absences. Develop flexible pandemic flu attendance and sick leave policies. Event workers may need to stay home when they are sick, caring for a sick household member or caring for their children in the event of school dismissals. Identify critical job functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training workers (similar to planning for holiday staffing).” – CDC Pandemic Guidance

Other questions a station a response management team should consider:

- What will happen if a third of our staff is unable to come to work?
- Which meetings are essential and which can be canceled?
- What daily duties are essential and must be staffed for?
- Which station positions are mission critical?
- Which on-site positions are critical?
- Who can perform those on-site positions?
- What cross training can be done to grow the number of people who can perform critical positions?
- What cross training can be done remotely if an employee can't come in?
- Which critical duties can be combined functions done by one person if necessary?
- Will we ask employees to take on additional duties?
- If we ask for additional duties, what is the compensation?
- Do we need to ask for volunteers or will we assign work for critical duties?
- What about part-time employees whose work is not possible or are not needed? Will we address concerns of part-time employees regarding lost pay?
- If station employees cannot complete their intended duties, like sales teams find they are not able to make calls, what support can they offer the rest of the station?
- Are we prepared if our staff needs to stay onsite for an extended period of time?
- What if our mission critical employees have to self-isolate at our business location?
- Do we have an up to date employee emergency contact list?

These are not easy questions but should be addressed to ensure your station can address any staffing challenges should your community be impacted by COVID-19.