Workforce Improvement and Skill Enhancement Project (WISE)

Guidebook for Private Sector Business Continuation During the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Crisis

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Handbook for Private Sector Business Continuation During the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Crisis
COVID-19 pandemic overview and effect on businesses:

The Novel Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) is a new virus from a larger family of viruses known as “Corona viruses” (the word ‘corona’ is Latin for ‘crown’). These viruses infect the respiratory system and cause symptoms with varying intensity, ranging from common cold to more serious diseases like “SARS” and “MERS”. No treatment has yet been discovered for COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease transmitted from human-to-human. The disease first broke out in China in 2019, then continued to spread internationally.

COVID-19 is impacting businesses worldwide. Many sectors were hit by the viral outbreak with respect to both supply and demand. The diagram below shows Egyptian business sectors closest to ‘winning’ or ‘losing’ in the short term due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

However, whether your business has already been largely impacted or you have not felt the impact yet, certain necessary precautions must be taken to ensure your institution’s capacity to best weather this global health crisis. This can be done by developing a crisis management and business continuation plan.

Purpose of the guidebook

USAID is keen to provide support to private sector institutions in order to confront dangers associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, the private sector support component of the WISE project endeavors to help private sector institutions overcome the crisis through this guidebook.

This guidebook aims to help private sector institutions develop plans for crisis management and business continuation amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidebook covers the following operational hazards:
a- Human resource management  
b- Processes and functions  
c- Supplier and client management  
d- Communication plan

The guidebook helps businesses with the following as well:

a- Identifying COVID-19 symptoms and the means by which the virus spreads, as well as appropriate precautions and some tips for tackling the current situation;  
b- Developing crisis management plans, and plans for business continuation;  
c- Minimizing health risks for employees;  
d- Minimizing the risk of business facilities becoming an infection cluster;  
e- Ensuring plans are in place should employees take days off, become infected, or are quarantined; and  
f- Making alternative arrangements with suppliers and clients for continued productivity.

**COVID-19 transmission routes:**

The primary method for COVID-19 transmission is through droplets escaping from an infected person’s nose or mouth upon coughing. These droplets can settle on materials and surfaces around an infected person, and eventually infect other people who touch these things and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. For this reason, it is important to keep a distance of at least one meter from an infected person.

**Symptoms:**

COVID-19’s primary symptoms include fever, fatigue, and dry cough. Some infected persons may suffer aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, or diarrhea. These symptoms typically begin as mild and intensify gradually.

**Preventive measures:**

- Clean hands continuously by rubbing them with an alcohol-based disinfectant or properly washing them with soap and water.  
- When coughing or sneezing, make sure to cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue. Discard tissues afterwards and wash your hands.  
- Avoid being close to an infected person and keep a distance of no less than 1 meter (3 feet).  
- If you are running a fever, coughing, and experiencing difficulty breathing, do not hesitate to go to a medical facility.
Available preventive technique:

Quarantine is not the ideal solution to the COVID-19 pandemic due to life necessities that require moving throughout the community and being in some contact with others. Therefore, the ideal solution is to decrease movement, avoid gatherings, and limit in-person interaction with others.

High-risk group for contracting the Corona disease:

Older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. hypertension, heart diseases, and diabetes) are at a higher risk than others for contracting COVID-19 and developing dangerous symptoms.

Some tips for tackling the current situation:

- Beware of sharing space with someone who does not feel well (especially if they show symptoms typical of the novel Coronavirus).
- If you show symptoms of the novel Coronavirus, contact a healthcare facility before going in.
- Develop a plan in case there is an outbreak in your community.
- If you leave the house, try to stick to all the same safety guidelines you implement at home.
- Stay informed of virus updates from trusted sources.
- Spraying the body with alcohol or chlorine does not kill the virus; it could even damage clothes or mucous membranes (like the eyes and nose).
- Pets at home could spread the virus. Hands must be washed with soap and water after touching pets.
- Antibiotics do not offer effective protection against the virus. They only eliminate microbes.
- Facemasks should not be reused, nor their front surface touched. The N95 mask offers protection against the virus only when it is used properly.
- Regularly washing the nose with saline does not protect against viral infection.
- Hand driers do not effectively eliminate the virus in 30 seconds. Hands must be rubbed with an alcohol-based disinfectant or washed with water and soap before using hand driers.
- Garlic does not guard against infection.
- There are no specific drugs to protect against or treat the viral infection. Lab tests and chest x-rays are the most credible examination for the novel Coronavirus.
Overview of crisis management and business continuation plans:

Crisis management is a special management process used to overcome crises. Crisis management involves the application of different scientific and administrative tools, as well as processes to mitigate negative side effects and make the most of positive externalities.

Crisis management refers to the way or ways through which a crisis can be controlled; when an institution faces some crisis, there must exist some tools and options available to contain and overcome the crisis, and also learn from it. Crisis management can refer to all different crisis types, e.g. military, security, political, or economic.

Stages of crisis evolution (crisis life cycle):

Stages of crisis management:

- **Pre-crisis stage**: (discovering red flags – readiness and prevention)
- **Crisis stage**: (crisis unfolding – damage control and containment)
- **Post-crisis stage**: (rejuvenation – learning)

Stages of confronting the crisis

- Collecting crisis-related facts
- Calculating loss
- Preparing scenarios
- Identifying crisis handling strategies
- Communication

The objectives in facing a crisis are to:

- Stopping deterioration and loss.
- Controlling the progress of the crisis and moving to halt it.
- Utilizing the ensuing situation for reform and development.
- Studying reasons and factors that led to the crisis in order to adopt preventive measures, lest the same or similar crisis happen again. The way a crisis is initially handled is the main factor in determining how the crisis situation will develop, how severe the losses will be, and how well the crisis is ultimately overcome.
**Post-crisis stages:**

**Success factors in crisis management:**

- Realizing the importance of time.
- Developing a database.
- Providing early warning systems.
- Constant readiness to confront crises.
- Ability to leverage and mobilize available resources.
- Effective and efficient communication systems.

**Crisis prevention and readiness factors:**

- Collecting facts about crisis
- Situation analysis
- Staff training
- Providing equipment
- Solution scenarios
- Communication list
- Crisis team
- Periodic maintenance
- Crisis plan
- Exceptional management
Business continuation plan

Companies are encouraged to develop and execute business continuation plans. These plans will help companies reduce any stalling that could slow their processes and ensure the continuity of business amidst the outbreak. Companies can take steps along the following outline to ensure they are adequately prepared to continue business.

A. Human resource management

- Each company must create a crisis management and business continuation team and assign a leader. The team is tasked with developing executive plans to counter the crisis and ensure that workers are aware of these plans. The team must also work to uphold employees' compliance with these plans during a crisis. Specifically, the team is responsible for:
  - Conducting a business impact analysis and developing a crisis management and business continuation plan accordingly.
  - Monitoring viral outbreaks with the management of the institution and sending clear messages to workers with instructions if there is a need to start taking alternative measures.
  - Teaching workers the newest available information regarding the virus and keeping them informed of the need for infection control and preventive measures.
  - Collecting updated contact information for all workers i.e. home address / home phone number / cell phone number. The team must also make sure that all workers stay aware of their contact trace information (workers must inform the team if they were admitted to the hospital with a suspected infection in order that the team can check on workers and undertake necessary measures and actions towards finding those they were in contact with at work for house isolation).
  - Monitoring the efficiency of remote working.
  - Keeping isolated workers informed on institution’s happenings.
  - Ensuring that the workplace has enough cleaning supplies and disinfectants (e.g. tissues, hand towels, sterilizing agents, masks, gloves, etc.)
  - Keeping workers updated on personal hygiene procedures and informing them about the different types of thermometers (mouth and ear) and the correct way for using them.
  - Placing signs explaining the right way for washing and disinfecting hands in all the relevant sites.
  - Ensuring the common spaces are being periodically disinfected (e.g. warehouses, changing rooms, bathrooms and meeting rooms).
- Developing a leadership continuation plan in case main decision makers and executives are absent.
• Organizing flexible work arrangements for high-risk workers as well as those who need to stay at home for other virus-related reasons (e.g. caring for a family member).
• Reviewing policies on yearly vacations, absentee days, and sick leave.
• Reviewing sign in and out times and staff transportation to and from the workplace.
• Checking different work stations and identifying daily numbers of present workers in each. Numbers may need to be cut by half with workers moving into staggered shifts in order to ensure good workspace ventilation and hygiene.
• Reviewing the possibility of work-from-home arrangements for some staff members and developing follow-up techniques for remote staff.

B. Processes and functions

Companies must identify the functions of crucial jobs (priority activities) and essential workers. Institutions must consider the following:

• Assigning shifts for work teams (e.g. team A and team B) who could be divided over different working schedules (e.g. team A works in the institution during certain weeks, while team B works remotely). Workers in the institution should be kept at the maximum possible distance from one another to avoid the risk of passing the infection amongst one another.
• Training workers on role swapping and putting in place coverage plans to minimize confusion.
• Identifying essential units or main departments for the continuity of business.
• Identifying products or services essential to the institution.

Business impact analysis:

• Identifying key activities and the time needed to resume them.
• Evaluating and analyzing the requirements needed to resume and continue key activities.
• Evaluating and analyzing the impact of stopping key activities.
• Evaluating the timeframe within which activities, resources, assets, and products should be reinstated post crisis.
• Evaluating the maximum time period, after a stoppage, the company can endure before workers must resume working.

C. Suppliers’ and clients’ management

The crisis management and business continuation team is responsible for the following:

• Identifying key suppliers and service providers in parallel with discussing and developing business continuation procedures for suppliers and service providers.
• Identifying key clients and ensuring plans are in place to meet clients’ needs.
• Developing a plan on how and when to activate the following:
  ✓ Alternative suppliers
  ✓ Alternative delivery methods to clients

D. Communication plan

The crisis management and business continuation is also responsible for:

• Developing a communication plan in line with the business continuation plan.
• Ensuring that all staff members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities before the outbreak of a virus.
• Informing staff members of the business continuation plan procedures that will affect them and continuously updating these policies. During an outbreak, the team must also update staff on progress achieved in handling the crisis, and new measures to be implemented by the institution.
• Creating a communication channel through which staff members can report their conditions and pose inquiries.
• Identifying concerned stakeholders e.g. suppliers, service providers, and clients. The team will also be responsible for deciding on key messages appropriate for each stakeholder group and informing them on possible emergency procedures during the outbreak.
### Business continuation plan

Main steps for continuing key activities in the institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main activity</th>
<th>Sub activities</th>
<th>Implementation responsibility</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Identifying cash flows and commitments | • Identifying cash balance and status of accounts.  
• Prioritizing payments and outstanding credit.  
• Limiting non-essential expenditures.  
• Preparing a table on expected cash flow and updating these expectations throughout the crisis.  
• Renegotiating conditions with suppliers and clients.  
• Listing the possible crisis-related implications and rewriting the budget.  
• Evaluating and analyzing the effects of halted production and services. | • Upper management  
• Finance department  
• Sales department  
• Procurement department |
| Forming the crisis management and business continuation team | • Forming a team, the size of which will be based on the number of workers in the firm, and the size of the facilities.  
• Identifying roles and responsibilities for the team leader and for team members.  
• Deciding on a specific budget for the team’s work. | • Upper management  
• Human resources department  
• Finance department |
| Assigning roles to workers in the institution | • Identifying departments, positions, and the total number of workers, as well as how to divide their work schedules to minimize contact.  
• Developing a strategy for workers’ attendance on flexible hour-basis.  
• Reviewing workers’ roles to identify those with the potential to work remotely, and the necessity of others to come to the workplace.  
• Training workers on methods of cleaning and disinfection and other precautions to be taken.  
• Keeping all workers informed of official virus-related information as it is released by trusted entities. | • Human resources department  
• Production department  
• Crisis management and business continuation team |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main activity</th>
<th>Sub activities</th>
<th>Implementation responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying orders and production specifics...</td>
<td>• Assigning crucial/essential tasks and services.</td>
<td>• Sales department</td>
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<td>• Identifying production quantities during the stages of operation.</td>
<td>• Production department</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identifying types and quantities of the final product.</td>
<td>• Marketing department</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Examining the possibility of manufacturing a new product/service in accordance with the current situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating supply chain</td>
<td>• Itemizing raw and starting material as well as production requirements.</td>
<td>• Crisis management and business continuation team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicating with suppliers to identify methods for handling and transportation.</td>
<td>• Production department</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing methods of delivery amid crisis with suppliers</td>
<td>• Procurement department</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying methods of transportation from suppliers as well as to customers.</td>
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<td>• Evaluating suppliers and verifying monitoring tactics applied in work places.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conducting a study on the possible impact of delays in the supply of raw materials from suppliers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Exploring the possibility of buying online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considering clients and buyers</td>
<td>• Checking with clients regarding orders and deliveries.</td>
<td>• Crisis management and business continuation team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing orders and delivery deadlines.</td>
<td>• Production department</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Exploring the possibility of online sales.</td>
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<td>• Exploring the possibility of opening new markets.</td>
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<td>Main activity</td>
<td>Sub activities</td>
<td>Implementation responsibility</td>
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| Production   | • Evaluating the impact of the length of the work stoppage on production.  
• Evaluating and analyzing production activities in order to reinstate and resume them efficiently.  
• Reviewing the possibility of outsourcing production or service-related activities depending on the nature of business.  
• Spacing workers on production lines or minimizing the number of workers involved to decrease contact.  
• Studying the possible effects of workers’ absenteeism.  
• Developing a production plan and exploring the possibility of workers working in shifts.  
• Studying the possibility of introducing changes to products or services as a result of the virus outbreak and planning for any changes. | • Crisis management and business continuation team  
• Production department  
• Quality control department  
• Human resources department |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Main activity</th>
<th>Sub activities</th>
<th>Implementation responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications and outreach</td>
<td>• Developing a timely communication plan with staff members during the crisis.</td>
<td>• Crisis management and business continuation team</td>
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<td>• Drafting a communication plan in case of emergency.</td>
<td>• Human resources department</td>
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<td>• Developing a plan for making cleaning and disinfection supplies available for workers and visitors, as well as a plan for the safe disposal of waste, complete with instructions special instructions from authorities.</td>
<td>• Information technology department</td>
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<td>• Making arrangements to provide guidance for those infected or suspected of infection in the workplace, consistence with guidance from authorities.</td>
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<td>• Identifying work flow efficiency measures to minimize the risk of workers being infected in the workplace.</td>
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<td>• Developing plans to minimize personal contact with clients, suppliers, and workers.</td>
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<td>• Evaluating information technology infrastructure to support remote working and remote interaction with clients.</td>
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Working remotely
The reality of life has changed after the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is now a given that the consequences of this change will continue to affect our businesses, institutions, economy, and society over the course of 2020 and beyond. For the time being, we need prudent and smart leadership. Remember the old adage: "Adversity does not build character, it reveals it."

There is no manual of what to do in the face of the pandemic of the century. We all face threats on multiple fronts simultaneously: self, family, employees, clients, suppliers, business partners, and governmental and financial systems. All we can do is to offer some good ideas for companies facing this new reality. So, what should you do if you are in charge of a team, an organization, or a company?

First, educate yourself:
This means going beyond watching TV news. Do not indulge in the melodrama that characterizes the media (especially social media) these days. Good sources worth monitoring include the daily status report issued by the World Health Organization and any updates from the Egyptian Ministry of Health. The website of the latter contains practical advice on protection techniques.

Second: Be flexible, adaptive, and ready to make tough decisions:
Remember: the safety of those under your responsibility comes first. Working from home is only the first step. Making people feel safe is one of your most significant tasks as a leader.

In addition, since things change at an incredibly fast rate, draft a set of tactical steps for this new working technique. Think strategically and be prepared to adapt quickly. Concurrently, draft a clear plan for your organization.

Make sure to capitalize on the abilities of your team. Bring your team together to ensure plans and priorities are aligned, and to cooperate in handling emergency cases. Involve your team in planning for different scenarios. Work with them to distinguish between the important and the urgent, and help them do the same with their teams.

Third: Communicate extensively
Endeavor to preserve credibility and optimism while communicating. Be realistic but remain positive. Set up multiple new ways to stay in touch with most staff working remotely. Establish the type and frequency of contact that is appropriate for your organization.

Efficiency indicators for working remotely:
- Staff members know how to use remote work techniques.
- A mechanism is in place to enable employees to sign in and out remotely.
- Electronic systems or procedures for communicating and holding meetings remotely are enabled.
- Regular remote follow-up on task accomplishment levels.
- Daily reports on work productivity levels.
Additional resources for firms operating in Egypt during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Some private sector organizations’ experiences in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic

Some the private sector institutions have already adopted measures to help face the COVID-19 crisis, which include:

- Educating employees on the dangers of the novel Coronavirus and giving them the necessary instructions to maintain their safety.

- Taking precautions to protect workers from novel Coronavirus infection, including:
  - Changing daily sign-in systems from fingerprint to magnetic cards, iris scanners, or signatures.
  - Providing cleaning and sterilization supplies for workers (disinfectants, masks, gloves, etc.).
  - Taking workers’ temperatures daily.
  - Sterilizing buildings, tools, equipment, and materials.

- Despite the financial losses incurred by some private sector institutions, they endeavored to keep their workers on staff by:
  - Deducting rewards and benefits, while continuing to pay basic wage. Alternatively, deducting a portion of the basic wage from all workers in order to keep every worker employed.
  - Allowing workers to use up annual leave during this period.

- Implementing remote work systems where possible.

- Dividing workers into two teams, then alternating each team working with half of the usual force.

- Explore the possibility of adding new products or services that are in line with the current market demands.
**Economic decisions pertinent to private sector institutions**

The Minister of Finance and rapporteur for the "Economic Group": Presidential directives to support sectors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

The government drafted a bill enshrining a package of supportive measures for the affected sectors, including:

- Allowing a 3-months grace period for estate tax repayment or the possibility of installment payments for the affected sectors without a late penalty.
- Waiving real estate taxes on hotels and tourist establishments for six months and allowing a 3-month grace period for the payment of all taxes due without fines or interest.
- Allowing the affected sectors to submit income statements until June 30 and allowing payments to be made in 3 installments without a late penalty.
- Arranging a "support loan" for the civil aviation sector, with a grace period of up to 2-years for repayment.
- Quick payment of 30% of exporters’ dues (of no less than EGP 5 million each) to the Export Development Fund.
- The affected sectors are required to maintain their labor force in order to benefit from any of these supportive measures.
- Funding a EGP 500 EGP monthly grant for the informal labor sector for a period of three months, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower.

The General Investment Authority (GAFI) allowed free zone projects to sell up to 50% of their products to the local market, for a period of 6 months, except for prohibited fields. GAFI also allowed industrial projects in the free zones to sell their supply of raw materials, production requirements, and accessories to the local market (though, no more than 20%) conditioned upon the approval of the Zone Director. Approval of the Head of the free zones sector is required for values beyond these allowances. GAFI also issued additional decrees to ameliorate the situation.
The following are the most prominent women-responsive policies and measures taken by the Egyptian government:

Since the start of the novel Coronavirus outbreak, the Ministry of Health and Population has been tirelessly working in cooperation with all relevant bodies to issue decisions and programs to combat the outbreak. The ministry also publishes all data on the virus and infections with transparency, complete with disaggregation by gender, age, and medical condition.

(March 14, 2020)
- The President issued a decree to suspend universities and schools for a period of two weeks.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity issued a decree to suspend kindergartens for two weeks. "Child protection allows mothers to check on the safety of their children"

(March 16, 2020)
- The Prime Minister issued decree No. 719 of 2020, which enshrines provisions for:
  - Reducing the number of workers (males and females) in governmental bodies as part of a package of preventive measures taken by the State to prevent the spread of the virus.
  - Granting pregnant women or those caring for one or more child under the age of 12 an exceptional leave for the duration of said decree. "Allowing all working mothers to carry out their family duties without losing their jobs"
  - Granting leave for female workers taking care of a special needs child, as stipulated by a circular letter.
- The Ministry of Health and Population announced measures to be taken to dispense chronic disease medications, baby formulae, and family planning needs for 3 months. "Accessibility to the needed reproductive health services for women"

(March 22, 2020)
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity announced an increase in the number of beneficiaries of facilitated and simple-interest loans to start micro businesses designed to improve families’ standard of living. “Women-inclusive economic opportunities to those in need of microcredit”

(March 24, 2020)
- School, university, and kindergarten suspension extended.
**Tips for preventing COVID-19 infection and reducing spread within the private sector:**

- Cleaning using dilute chlorine (ratio of 1:9) and soap as disinfectants for floors and surfaces of all places in the factory e.g. production halls, corridors, offices, bathrooms, and stairs.
- Directing workers to use 70% ethyl alcohol.
- Using 70% ethyl alcohol regularly in all production and packaging halls.
- Sterilizing facilities’ transportation sources (if any).
- Disinfecting production supplies and equipment daily.
- Disinfecting raw materials before they enter the factory.
- Emptying waste bins more regularly.
- On-site workers should never exceed 50% of the workforce and necessary precautions are taken to avoid gatherings anywhere in the factory.
- Creating a hotline through which factory workers can report any suspected infection.
- Taking workers’ temperature upon entering facilities, and recording results in a separate sheet. Directing any worker who showing any symptoms of cold or flu to stay home. If a temperature is observed at home, workers are sent to the factory doctor or the nearest hospital.
- Mandating everyone in the factory and production halls to wear masks, gloves, and overshoes.
- Allowing some employees to work from home to reduce in-factory numbers.
- Maintaining the minimum number of workers per shift.
- Maintaining administrative offices at minimum number of workers (no more than 2 per office), while ensuring adequate ventilation.
- Use paper cups instead of glass.
- Minimize meetings and avoid in-person meetings wherever possible.
- Minimize travel, especially travel requiring commuting between governorates.
- Using all possible technology to reduce opportunities for exposure.
- Suspending all in-person training activities, and only permitting training via technological means.
- Instructing the factory doctor to conduct periodic follow-up with workers.
- Mandating that the factory doctor keep a record of facility visitors, visits times, visitors’ names, nature of their work, and their addresses as a reference if needed e.g. in case of an outbreak.
- Training workers, employees, managers, and supervisors on preventive measures, including hygiene and sterilization programs used within the facility, and recording what is being trained.
- Emphasizing workers’ and employees’ personal hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfecting workers' living quarters (if any) and their personal belongings.
General Instructions:
- Full compliance with governmental decrees.
- Partial or complete closure in the event of an in-factory infection.
- Balancing preventive procedures and workflow.
- Do not harm workers’ wages.
- Commit to official working hours in accordance with the curfew announced by the authorities.
- Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of it in a closed waste bin.
- Get adequate rest and sleep.
- Avoid contact with people who show symptoms of the viral infection.

Advice to the public on the novel Coronavirus Correcting misconceptions:

- **COVID-19 can be transmitted in hot and humid regions**
  Based on the evidence available to date, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in all regions, including those with hot and humid weather. Whatever the climate, take preventive measures if you live in an area where cases of COVID-19 infection have been reported or where you intend to travel. Perhaps the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is to continuously wash your hands thoroughly. By washing your hands, you can get rid of virus particles that may be on your hands, thus avoiding possible infection through touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

- **Are hand dryers (available in public toilets, for example) effective at eliminating the novel Coronavirus within 30 seconds?**
  No. Hand dryers are not effective in killing the novel Coronavirus. To protect yourself against the novel Coronavirus, you should frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash them with soap and water. Once your hands are cleaned, you should dry them thoroughly by using paper towels or a warm air dryer.

- **Can N95 masks be reused? Can they be sterilized by hand sanitizer?**
  No. Facemasks, including flat medical masks or N95 masks, should not be reused if you are exposed to someone infected with the novel Coronavirus or other respiratory infections as the front side of the mask is already contaminated. The mask should be removed without touching the front and properly disposed of. After removing the mask, hands should be rubbed with an alcohol-based disinfectant or washed with soap and water.
Do UV sterilizer lamps kill the novel Coronavirus?
Ultraviolet lamps should not be used to sterilize hands or any other parts of the skin as these rays may cause skin allergies. For more details, check this special link on the World Health Organization's website:


Does spraying the body with alcohol or chlorine help eliminate the novel Coronavirus?
No. Spraying the body with alcohol or chlorine will not kill viruses that have already entered your body. It may even be harmful to clothing or mucous membranes (such as the eyes and mouth). However, both alcohol and chlorine may be beneficial for disinfecting surfaces, but they must be used in accordance with the appropriate recommendations.

There are several measures you can take to protect yourself from the novel Coronavirus. Begin by regularly cleaning your hands through rubbing them with an alcohol-based disinfectant or by washing them with soap and water. For more preventive measures, check the advice issued by the organization at the following link:


Do vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the novel Coronavirus?
No. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccine, do not provide protection against the novel Coronavirus.

The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine against COVID-19, and the WHO is supporting their efforts.

Although these vaccines are not effective against novel COVID-19, vaccination against respiratory illnesses is highly recommended to protect your health.

Can regularly rinsing your nose with saline help prevent infection with the novel Coronavirus?
No. There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline has protected people from infection with the novel Coronavirus.

There is some limited evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline can help people recover more quickly from the common cold. However, regularly rinsing the nose has not been shown to prevent respiratory infections.
Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the novel Coronavirus?
Garlic is a healthy food that possesses some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the novel Coronavirus.

Does applying sesame oil to the skin prevent the entry of the novel Coronavirus into the body?
No. Sesame oil does not eliminate the novel Coronavirus. Some chemical disinfectants kill the novel Coronavirus when applied on surfaces. Disinfectants include those containing bleaches, chlorine, 75% ethanol, proxy acetic acid, and chloroform.

However, their effect on the virus is weak to non-existent if applied to skin or just below the nose. Worth mentioning, it is also dangerous to apply these chemicals to the skin.

Who is more susceptible to novel Coronavirus? Older or younger people?
People of all ages can be infected by the novel Coronavirus. Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.
The WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand and good respiratory hygiene.

Are antibiotics effective in preventing and treating the novel Coronavirus?
No. Antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria.
The novel Coronavirus is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment.
However, if you are hospitalized for novel COVID-19, you may receive antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

Are there any specific medicines to prevent or treat the novel Coronavirus?
To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the novel Coronavirus.
However, those infected with the virus should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care. Some specific treatments are under investigation and will be tested through clinical trials. THE WHO is helping to accelerate research and development efforts with a range of partners.
Workforce Improvement and Skill Enhancement Project (WISE)

WHO designates a "Whatsapp" number for Coronavirus awareness

Send 5 or emoji to receive travel tips
Send 1 or emoji to receive latest statistics
Send 6 or emoji to receive latest newspaper updates
Send 2 or emoji to receive advice on preventive measures
Send 7 or emoji to Share
Send 3 or emoji to receive answers for your questions
Send 4 or emoji myth busters

+41 79 893 18 92

Save the number on your device and send a message with a number or an emoji to get the info

Novel Coronavirus "COVID-19"

Social distancing is the ideal solution to prevent Coronavirus outbreak

Applying social distancing and minimizing contact help reduce numbers of infections as in the following diagram:

30 Days
406 infected

5 Days
2.5 infected

Now infected
One Person

5 Days
1.25 infected

Now infected
One Person

5 Days
0.65 infected

Now infected
One Person

www.care.gov.eg /your_health_our_concern


Social distancing is a preventive measure to limit the spread of the virus by minimizing contact with others leading to slowing down of spread rate.

4 ways to adhere to social distancing

Avoid social events
Avoid crowded places
Avoid crowded shopping places

Novel Coronavirus is one of the most dangerous viruses due to the speed of its spreading. Consequently, health experts recommend adhering to social distancing

Corona is the highest spreading among viruses

The Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center

Private Sector Support Component
Yes. Respiratory viruses can be passed by shaking hands and touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Greet people with a wave, a nod or a bow instead.

Should I avoid shaking hands because of the new coronavirus?

To prevent COVID-19 it is safest to avoid physical contact when greeting. Safe greetings include a wave, a nod, or a bow.

World Health Organization

#Coronavirus #COVID19

3 March 2020

#Coronavirus #COVID19

8 March 2020
No. Regularly washing your bare hands offers more protection against catching COVID-19 than wearing rubber gloves. You can still pick up COVID-19 contamination on rubber gloves. If you then touch your face, the contamination goes from your glove to your face and can infect you.

World Health Organization
#Coronavirus #COVID19

9 March 2020

What type of disinfectant can I use to wipe down surfaces to protect against COVID-19?

If a surface is dirty, first wipe it down with regular household soap or detergent and rinse with water. Then use a regular household disinfectant like bleach — its active ingredient (sodium hypochlorite) kills bacteria, fungi and viruses. Always protect your hands when using bleach (e.g., wear rubber gloves). Dilute bleach with water according to directions on the package.

World Health Organization
Western Pacific Region

#COVID19
Even though the new coronavirus can stay on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days (depending on the type of surface), it is very unlikely that the virus will persist on a surface after being moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperatures. If you think a surface may be contaminated, use a disinfectant to clean it. After touching it, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

FACT: The new coronavirus cannot be transmitted through goods manufactured in China or any country reporting COVID-19 cases.

What should I do if shops are sold out of hand sanitizer?

That’s okay. Washing your hands using regular soap and water is also effective against COVID-19. Remember to wash between your fingers, the backs of your hands and around your nails.
Can the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) survive in hot and humid climates?

Yes, 2019-nCoV has spread to countries with both hot and humid climates, as well as cold and dry. Wherever you live, whatever the climate it is important to follow precautions. Wash your hands frequently and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a bent elbow. Throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands immediately afterwards.

World Health Organization
Western Pacific Region

#2019nCoV
7 Feb 2020

No. Hand dryers are not effective in killing the 2019-nCoV. To protect yourself against the new coronavirus, you should frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Once your hands are cleaned, you should dry them thoroughly by using paper towels or a warm air dryer.

#2019nCoV
Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. **However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

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If drinking water alleviates a sore throat, does this also protect against 2019-nCoV infection?

**While staying hydrated by drinking water is important for overall health, it does not prevent coronavirus infection.** If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider. If possible, call ahead so your health care provider can prepare for your visit.
Ministry of Health launches the "Sehat Misr" application for inquiries and instructions on the novel Coronavirus

Ministry of Health: The application alerts users if they approach or are in a location where infection exists.

The Ministry of Health and Population announced the launching of the "Sehat Misr" application on mobile devices, with a view towards educating and guiding citizens on preventive measures against the novel Coronavirus, and what to do if they suspect an infection.

The ministry also clarified that all information provided through the application is approved by both the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population and the World Health Organization, and is constantly updated according to the latest available data and information. The app also allows users to communicate with a certified medical team to follow up on symptoms in the event of a suspected infection, as well as advice on how to behave based on one’s medical condition. Link to app:


Through the app, users can report their condition or another’s, and record some information and symptoms that are required by the app in order to determine the probability of infection based on the answers recorded. The app then directs users to the appropriate procedure for their condition or that of another.

The app requires an Internet connection to download content on COVID-19-related inquiries and instructions. This content is constantly being updated by the Egyptian Ministry of Health.

The app sends alert messages when approaching an infected person or when in a place where an infection exists in order to take preventive measures and avoid infection. To activate that feature, users must allow the program to track their location. This feature is activated by users on their mobile phones.

The app also includes a variety of comprehensive articles on prevention methods and unsafe habits that can cause the transmission of the virus, as well as advice to strengthen immunity and the latest information about the virus and how to deal with it.

App users can communicate with the Egyptian Ministry of Health through WhatsApp as it allows them to connect directly with the Ministry’s WhatsApp number. The app also displays numbers and links to communicate with the Ministry through a variety of means and social media platforms.

The app also includes a sound alert feature played by voices of Egyptian actors to remind users of the instructions for prevention and protection from infection. This feature can be activated through the app settings function of the user’s mobile phone.
This guidebook was prepared by the Private Sector Support Component of the USAID-funded Workforce Improvement and Skill Enhancement project in Egypt. The contents of this guide are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the Government of the United States of America.

The authors of this guide relied on the following sources:

- **World Health Organization website**: [www.who.int/ar](http://www.who.int/ar)
- **Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population website**: [www.care.gov.eg](http://www.care.gov.eg)
- **Guidebook on protecting the workforce in industrial institutions against novel Coronavirus issued by MTI-affiliated MSMEDA (Ministry of Trade and Industry affiliated authority – Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development agency)**
- **Women-responsive Policies and Programs Tracker During the COVID-19 Pandemic issued by National Council for Women (NCW).**
- **Decode EFC (Economic and Financial Consulting) report on COVID-19 effect on economic sectors in Egypt**
- **Ministry of Finance’s decrees**
- **GAFI decrees**
Remarks: