

## Microfastenings Limited

### SERIOUS VIRAL EPIDEMIC OR PANDEMIC POLICY

#### INTRODUCTION

Some infections such as some strains of influenza, SARs or the coronavirus are highly infectious viral illnesses that have the capacity to spread rapidly. When a new viral strain emerges, one of the following situations may occur:

- A serious epidemic - where a disease infects a significantly greater number of people in the area than is usual, or
- A pandemic – which is an epidemic of global proportions

Such an illness will spread rapidly because people will not have any natural resistance to it. It is difficult to predict the scale, severity and impact of a serious epidemic or pandemic, but research suggests that in the case of a pandemic, it could affect the entire country and that up to half the population could develop the illness. There could also be more than one wave of the illness.

During a serious viral epidemic or pandemic, the Company's overall aim will be to encourage our staff to carry on as normal if they are well, while taking additional precautions to protect them from exposure to infection and to lessen the risk of spread to others.

In terms of business continuity, this means that we will seek to sustain our core business and services as far as is practicable and therefore we will continue to operate largely within the existing framework of company policies and procedures. However, the company recognises that during such times some additional provisions will be required to support staff.

#### DURING A SERIOUS EPIDEMIC OR PANDEMIC

During a recognised viral epidemic or pandemic, Microfastenings Limited will implement the following provisions:

##### Communications:

During the period of a serious epidemic or pandemic regular guidance and sources of information and support will be made available via line managers / supervisors, noticeboards, the company's Intranet and website. Staff should monitor these sources closely to stay up to date with what is happening within the workplace and what action is being taken to ensure the company meets its obligations to staff, customers and other stakeholders.

##### Additional Hygiene Arrangements:

- The company will provide antibacterial sanitiser located throughout company premises and staff will be encouraged and reminded to use these regularly.
- All surfaces, door handles, banister rails, telephones, computer keyboards etc. will be cleaned more frequently.
- All waste bins will be emptied daily.
- Staff are encouraged to always use clean tissues to cover their mouth / nose when they cough / sneeze (and not to use cloth handkerchiefs or re-use tissues) and to wash / sanitise their hands regularly and specifically after coughing or sneezing.

##### Vaccination

- The company may identify certain key staff and arrange for those staff to be given a vaccination (if available) at the company's expense.
- This would be a purely voluntary arrangement and staff may refuse to have this if they wish.



### Customers

- In customer-facing areas the company will provide antibacterial sanitiser, disposable tissues and covered bins for public use, and notices will be posted to encourage customers to use these items.
- Where possible some separation between our staff and customers will be encouraged for example by use of physical barriers. Please note that it is not company policy to issue or allow the use of face masks; this will however remain under review and will be dependant on medical advice and availability.

### Visitors

- Visitors to company premises will largely be discontinued except in exceptional circumstances for the duration of the epidemic / pandemic.
- Visitors will be asked if they have any symptoms before being allowed into company premises and if they do they will be refused entry.
- Visitors will be asked to sanitise their hands before entering the company premises.
- Visitors should be confined to meeting rooms where at all possible.

### Face to Face Meetings

- Travel should largely be avoided unless absolutely essential and in particular if it involves the use of public transport.
- Face to face meetings should be avoided wherever possible and use of telephone / teleconferencing / email facilities should be encouraged.
- ~~Where face to face meetings are unavoidable, the Company's designated meeting rooms should be used which will have sanitiser pumps / tissues / waste bins provided and will be cleaned daily.~~

### Staff Identified as Potentially At-risk

- Staff at risk of developing viral-related complications (e.g. pregnant workers and those with compromised immune systems) will be reassigned from high-risk work sites and locations. If this is not possible it may be necessary to ask such staff to work from home, or remain at home until it is deemed safe to return to the workplace.

### Staff with symptoms

The most significant symptoms of a viral illness generally are the sudden onset of: fever, cough or shortness of breath; other symptoms may include: headache, tiredness, chills, aching muscles, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, loss of appetite. Specific viral infections may produce a different range of symptoms; the Company will ensure that the symptoms of the current illness are clearly identified to staff.

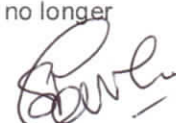
### Whilst at Work

- If a member of staff feels ill with symptoms consistent with the illness, it is important that they do not simply carry on working. They should report their illness immediately to their line manager and if the symptoms are consistent with the illness, they will be sent home, advised to contact their GP (if appropriate) and told not to return to work until the symptoms ~~have cleared and their GP has confirmed they are no longer infectious.~~

### Whilst not at Work

If they develop symptoms whilst not at work, they should adhere to the following advice:

- Inform their line manager that they are ill using the recognised process
- Stay at home and rest
- Not go to work until they are fully recovered and their GP has confirmed they are no longer infectious



- 10 As part of the reporting procedures, the line manager will seek the permission of the employee to inform their colleagues that they are suffering from the illness. This is really a private matter for the individual, but allowing colleagues to know about it will allow them to look out for early symptoms in themselves, and also allow any who may be at-risk in some way (e.g. pregnant) to seek medical advice.

### **Staff Who Have Difficulty Attending Work (where they don't have symptoms)**

- 10 In general staff will have no right to refuse to attend work during an epidemic / pandemic unless there is a clear health and safety risk. Their employment contract will oblige them to carry out their normal duties and refusal to do so may put them in breach of their contract. However the company is aware that certain situations can occur:
  - a) **Public transport is shut down**
    - 10 Where an employee has difficulty getting to work because of a failure in the public transport system due to the epidemic / pandemic, then they will be encouraged to seek other methods of getting to work. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible for some staff to work from home during this period of difficulty, to vary their start and end times, or to take annual or unpaid leave. Employees will not be paid if they fail to turn up for work and should discuss the options with their line manager as soon as possible.
  - b) **The employee reports that a member of their household has been diagnosed with the illness but that they themselves are OK and would be willing to attend work**
    - 10 The company recognises it has a duty of care to others in the workforce and the individual will be advised to remain at home until the ill relative is no longer infectious, however the company might wish to discuss the possibility of the employee working from home if possible. Under these circumstances the employee will receive their full pay as if they had been working normally.
  - c) **The employee reports that their child or other dependant has the illness and they are unable to arrange care at short-notice:**
    - 10 Under these circumstances the company recognises that the employee has a statutory right to a reasonable period of unpaid time off to care for these dependants. This is limited to sufficient time off to deal with the immediate issue and to sort-out short-term caring arrangements; the individual should discuss their situation with their line manager. The company will, in these circumstances, allow a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to be taken. However if the sick individual is a member of the employees household then the provisions of b) above would apply.
  - d) **The employee asks not to attend work because of fear of contracting illness:**
    - 10 The employee is contractually bound to attend work, and not doing so in these circumstances may be dealt with through the company disciplinary procedures. However if the company is convinced that the individual has psychological or physical reasons whereby they should not attend, then it may decide to agree to a period of annual / unpaid leave, or working from home arrangements with the employee concerned.
  - e) **The employee has school-age children and the school is closed due to the epidemic / pandemic:**
    - 10 The provisions of c) above would apply

**Working Flexibly**




10. The impact of any epidemic / pandemic will normally mean an increased workload due to a reduction in the actual staff available for work. It will therefore be essential that we maximise the capacity of our available workforce by asking staff to work more flexibly and /or differently. Therefore the company reserves the right to ask staff to undertake one or more of the following options:

- ~~work additional hours to cover for sick colleagues~~
- work more flexibly as required
- work in a different job role for a period (with appropriate training)
- work from an alternative location, or even from home if appropriate
- cancel planned annual leave

11. The use of these flexible work practices will vary depending on the seriousness of the staff shortages and the needs of the business at that time. Staff will be paid based on the additional hours and responsibilities they undertake.

### **Post Epidemic / Pandemic Considerations**

12. After the first wave of such an illness the company acknowledges that staff will need time to completely recover their full fitness and performance levels. Managers will ensure that staff who had been asked to work extended hours, or were denied their planned leave are given annual leave where at all possible. However, the possibility of subsequent waves has to be kept in mind and the company will discuss with staff the lessons learnt from the current epidemic / pandemic and continue with the preparations required to cope with subsequent waves.

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