



Project: Law in the Time of Corona

A guide by: The Law Association of Trinidad & Tobago

Practice Management:

Maintain a safe workplace



While legal services and the Judiciary are deemed to be essential services during the Pandemic period and therefore not explicitly subject to the Public Health arrangements put in place in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, precautions ought to be implemented in order to preserve the health and safety of your staff, clients, stakeholders and other visitors to your workplace.



In this guide you will learn



How to
manage
work
personnel



Work
hygiene &
safety
protocols



How to
manage
supply &
delivery lines

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to assisting all legal professionals as far as reasonably practicable. This brochure is produced by our Information Technology Committee and is one of a series containing guidance which we hope will assist legal professionals in continuing business operations during the Pandemic period. We hope it will be useful to you. If you have any questions, comments and/or suggestions on how to improve the information contained in this brochure, please feel free to contact admin@lawassociationtt.com

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

How to manage work personnel during the pandemic



WORK-FROM-HOME PROTOCOLS

Work-from-home protocols ought to be implemented and encouraged where possible and employees ought to be provided with hardware and software to facilitate this where necessary.

LIMIT STAFF TO THE MINIMUM REQUIRED FOR CORE FUNCTIONS

Core staff may include;

- a. legal professionals;
- b. receptionist/front office clerk to manage calls, deliveries and visitors;
- c. messenger/process server familiar with stakeholder arrangements;
- d. office manager responsible for managing and enforcing policies and procedures; and/or
- e. a maintenance manager to maintain cleaning schedules and implement enhanced sanitization processes.



USE STAFF ROSTERS



This would assist in rotating staff and thereby reducing their exposure to risk. These rosters should also apply to communal periods, such as lunch periods and breaks, which ought to be staggered to reduce staff congestion.



REVIEW OFFICE HOURS

Office hours should be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with restrictions on movement (curfews, for example) and to ensure their alignment with the operating hours of key stakeholders (registry opening hours, client opening hours etc.) and also to reduce the need for unnecessary attendance and/or travel by staff.



TRAIN EMPLOYEES ON SAFETY MEASURES

All employees ought to be specifically trained on the policies, procedures and practices put in place for their health and safety.

AVOID IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Physical staff meetings should be avoided where possible and supplanted by remote conferencing, email or social messaging where appropriate.



ENGAGING EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



Employees required to engage with external stakeholders should be carefully trained in:

- accessing services through electronic means and using provided hardware and software tools to allow for such access;
- safety arrangements put in place by stakeholders;
- changes to the operations implemented by stakeholders;
- how to safely interact with service agents; and
- how they are expected to commute.



WORK, HYGIENE & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

How to maintain a safe workplace



Personal sanitization stations

Personal sanitization stations should be set up at all entry and egress points to the workplace, and all persons entering or exiting the workplace ought to be encouraged to make use of them.

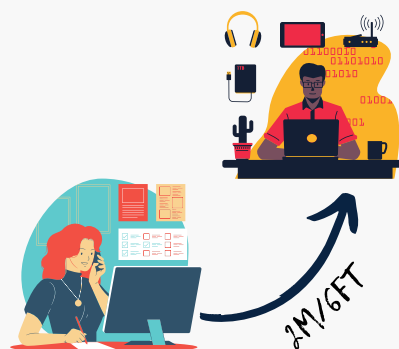


Safety gear & products

Masks and gloves ought to be made available to all staff, who should be encouraged to wear them. Hand sanitizers should be made available and be easily accessible at strategic points throughout the workplace, in particular in high traffic locations (for example kitchens, copy rooms and bathrooms).



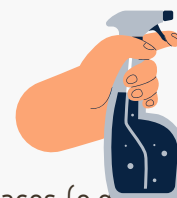
Where staff are required to be present to provide core functions and services, ensure that precautions are taken to keep critical supply and communication lines open.



Distanced work-stations

Workstations should be distanced from one another to reduce physical contact between employees. All staff should be encouraged to practice social distancing amongst themselves.

Routine sanitization



Work spaces, common contact surfaces (e.g. doorknobs) and shared equipment (e.g. refrigerators, copiers and telephones), ought to be routinely and regularly sanitized and also sanitized after each use by staff.

Safety policies



Safety policies should be developed and circulated to staff members in relation to:

- the proper washing of hands;
- closed coughing;
- staying away from work if symptomatic;
- reducing physical contact;
- cleaning contact surfaces; and
- the wearing of personal protective equipment.



MANAGE SUPPLY & DELIVERY LINES



HAVE ESSENTIAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Maintain safety of staff operations

Office managers should procure essential personal protective equipment (gloves, masks) and supplies (e.g. hand sanitizer, soap, disinfectant wipes/liquids and water) to allow for safe operations by staff and regularly refresh their stock of these items.



MAINTAIN ACCESS TO FOREIGN FUNDS

Establish foreign currency accounts

The COVID-19 Pandemic is likely to exacerbate the drain on accessible foreign funds. It may be useful for legal professionals to establish and maintain foreign currency accounts in order to receive and process payments from foreign-based clients in foreign currency, if needed to maintain foreign supply chains.

REVIEW CRITICAL SUPPLY LINES

Ensure accessibility and relevance

This is important for maintaining the provision of key equipment (copiers etc.), consumables (ink, paper, etc.) and services (copying, binding, commissioners of affidavits, couriers, process servers) during the Pandemic period and to put in place sufficient alternatives to protect against critical needs failures in times of unexpected disruption (traffic caused by roadblocks, curfews, business closures, etc.).



MONITOR OFFICE EXPENDITURE

Be mindful of discretionary spending

Office managers should be alert to reducing discretionary spending, and by extension office expenditure. Identify and seize opportunities to minimize consumption of critical office supplies and utilities to lower cost and insulate against demand-driven shortages.

