الإمــارات الـعـربية المتحدة UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

الـمجــــلـس الأعـــلـى للأمـن الــــوطــنـي
THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

الهيئة الـوطنية لإدارة الـطوارئ والأزمـات والكـوارث
National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority

Business Continuity Readiness Guidelines for Organizations

In the event of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

AE/SCNS/NCEMA 7002:2020

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1.0 Introduction

This Guide is a guiding document to increase the readiness of the organizations and maintain the provision of the essential services and products, as well as to reinforce the importance of synergy and sustainable cooperation between all concerned organizations.

This Guide explains ways to address the risks arising from the outbreak of epidemics in the organizations that may directly affect business continuity and community stability. In case the new COVID -19 virus spreads among employees at the workplace, precautionary and preventive measures should be taken to ensure the general safety of the employees.

Organizations shall adopt this approach by assessing risks, threats, weaknesses and consequences thereof, where the organizations concerned may adapt their approach to identifying risks according to nature of work.

Scenarios, assumptions and considerations were developed in an integrated manner to guide the process of planning at all levels, as related to points of improvement and the potential impacts of risks and threats.Business impact analysis is necessary to quantify the capabilities in terms of quantity and efficiency to perform the tasks. These capabilities should reflect in emergency and crisis plans, as well as in business continuity (in the short term for the emergency, crisis and disaster cycle) and in national preparedness strategies (in the long term).

Preparing for any event is the responsibility of all organizations and it is also the key to success in managing any emergency or crisis case. Preparation exercises can be conducted prior to incidents. The organizations may also involve all partners from governmental and private organizations and society. The national preparedness and readiness course for prevention, response and recovery tasks can be summarized as follows:

- Plan
- Organization & Staff
- Preparation
- Training
- Excercises, evaluation, and Continuous Development

2.0 Concepts

Business Continuity	The ability of the organization to continue its prioritized activities at predetermined level after the occurrence of disruptive incident.
Business Continuity Plan	Set of procedures in a documented form, which direct the organization to react, recover, restore and restart the predetermined level of operations after the interruption.
Epidemic	Health emergency that is represented in the emergence of cases of a severe disease among a group of people in a specific geographical area during a specific period of time with an obvious increase from the normally expected number compared to a similar period in the previous period, in the same location and time, for the same region, thus causing concern at the national level.
Sick Person	A person who is afflicted with the sickening factor, its toxic products or secretions, whether or not the signs and symptoms of the disease appear on him/her.
Contact Person	Any person who has been in contact with a sick person or a carrier of the sickening factor in a way that the infection is likely to be transmitted during the period of the disease spread.
Quarantine	Restricting the activities of healthy people or animals who were exposed to the sickening factor during the period of disease spread, for a period equivalent to the longest incubator period.
Sanitary Isolation	Separating the sick person, or a person suspected of being infected, from other healthy people, voluntarily or shortly, for the duration of the disease infection in appropriate places and health conditions, in order to prevent the transmission of the infection from the sick person or the person suspected of being sick to others.
Employees / Staff	Individuals working within the organization at all levels.
Customers	Individuals and customers from outside the organization of the concerned parties.

3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Guide is to demonstrate precautionary and preventive measures aiming to sustain business continuity for organizations, through:

Protecting and safeguarding individuals and society from the risk of epidemics in organizations.

Determining the critical functions for business continuity measures, taking into account the potential impacts of the epidemic.

Knowing the necessary measures to be taken in the event of an epidemic outbreaks among employees.

How to activate business continuity plans in the event of losing individuals due to an outbreak in the workplace.

Reducing and minimizing the spread of the epidemic in the organization.
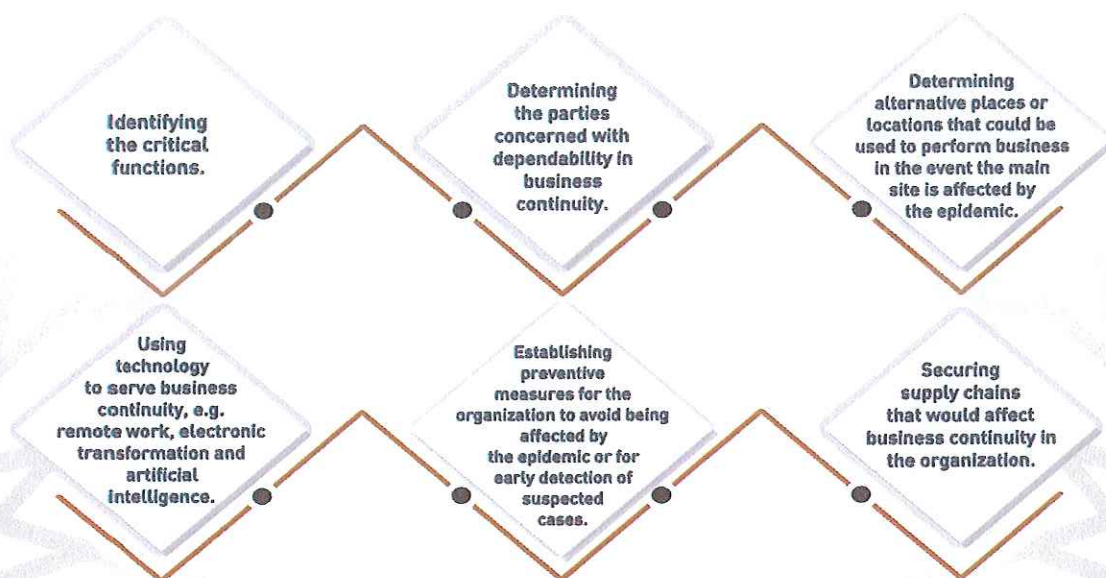
4.0 Assumptions and considerations

Through reviewing the specialized studies on the prevalence of epidemiological cases, assumptions and considerations have been developed that help reaching a comprehensive understanding of planning for business continuity in the organizations, as indicated below:

Spread of rumours, impacting the reputation of the organization and spreading panic among the employees.

Outbreak in an organization or any of its facilities.

Identifying a sick person or contact(s) with sick person(s).

Difficulty in controlling the spread of the epidemic in the organization.

Absence of vaccine or medicine to limit the spread of the epidemic in the organization.

Intense presence of individuals in the workplace.

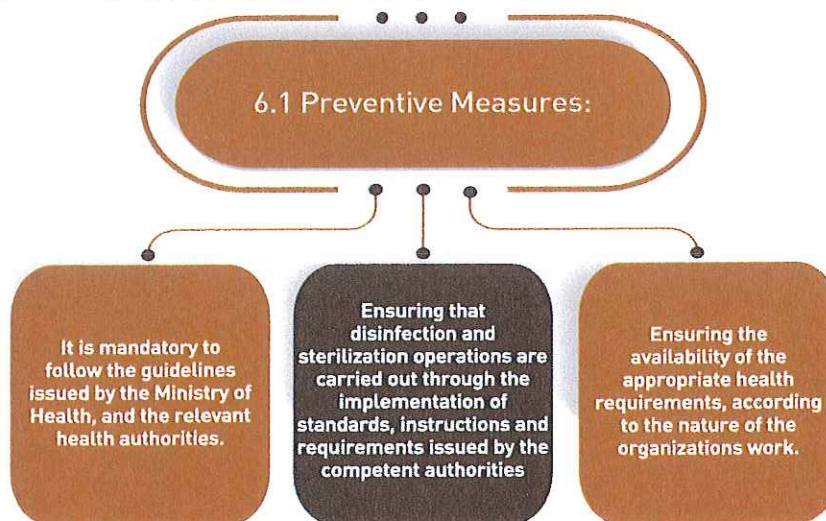Providing essential services and products.

5.0 Setting Priorities

Work priorities are set for the key elements as criteria to ensure business continuity; which are the individuals, systems and critical locations in the organization and the mechanism of accessing them:

Identifying the critical functions.

Determining the parties concerned with dependability in business continuity.

Determining alternative places or locations that could be used to perform business in the event the main site is affected by the epidemic.

Using technology to serve business continuity, e.g. remote work, electronic transformation and artificial intelligence.

Establishing preventive measures for the organization to avoid being affected by the epidemic or for early detection of suspected cases.

Securing supply chains that would affect business continuity in the organization.

6.0 Preventive and Precautionary Measures

The following points are considered as controls for the preventive and precautionary measures that organizations must follow in order to ensure the safety and protection of the work environment. The procedures are divided into three categories, as shown in the figure below:

6.1 Preventive Measures:

It is mandatory to follow the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, and the relevant health authorities.

Ensuring that disinfection and sterilization operations are carried out through the implementation of standards, instructions and requirements issued by the competent authorities

Ensuring the availability of the appropriate health requirements, according to the nature of the organizations work.

Determining and specifying temporary places for sanitary isolation (for organizations that have large numbers of employees and residential complexes).

Defining the medical and logistical requirements in coordination with the concerned authorities.

Raising the efficiency of the individuals involved in the security and protection of the organizations to ensure proper handling of any situation or suspicion of a situation.

Preparing work teams and carrying out periodic exercises to check teams' readiness.

6.2 Preparedness and Increasing of Readiness:

Monitoring employees' health status by tracking the status of employee vacations for the past and upcoming period and their travel destinations for official tasks or for personal purposes.

Providing thermal detection devices for organizations that receive large numbers of customers.

Coordination and prior identification of the hospitals concerned to transfer the suspected cases (after isolation).

6.3 Response and Handling of Cases:

Isolation of suspects in places designated for temporary isolation (pending transfer to hospital).
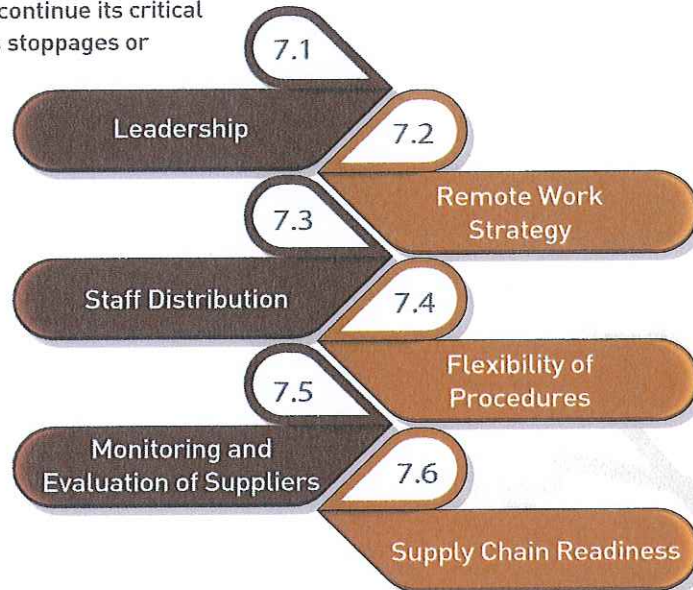
Determining the contacts of confirmed and suspected cases.

Coordination with health organizations to transport contacts to hospitals to carry out the necessary checks.

Providing the necessary logistical support in all cases.

7.0 Planning for Business Continuity During Outbreaks

Business continuity planning stage is based on major steps that depend on the effectiveness and ability of the organization to continue its critical activities in the event of business stoppages or disruption:

7.1 Leadership

7.2 Remote Work Strategy

7.3 Staff Distribution

7.4 Flexibility of Procedures

7.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Suppliers

7.6 Supply Chain Readiness

7.1 Leadership:

- Activating the procedures necessary to respond to the event during epidemics.
- Directing and supporting security and protection programs with the necessary resources and following up to ensure that their objectives are achieved.
- Supporting and providing the necessary resources, needs and requirements to implement the business continuity plan and mitigate the risks associated with the disruption of operations.
- Coordination with external parties (police, transport, ambulance, and hospitals) to request support and assistance.

7.2 Remote Work Strategy:

- Readiness of the technical infrastructure of the organizations to work remotely.
- Readiness of the employees to use the Technology of remote work.
- Ability to manage the systems internally or remotely.
- Determining and classifying the jobs that must be available in the workplace and the jobs that can be continued with the remote work.

- Providing health control and preventive measures for public safety.
- Monitoring the efficiency of remote work performance.
- Determining other alternative facilities or sites for carrying out the critical functions.
- Possibility of outsourcing the implementation of Critical activities according to the nature of work in the organization.

7.3 Staff Distribution:

- Determining the number of employees for critical jobs and distributing them in different locations in order to reduce mixing and contact.
- Determining the number of employees for less critical jobs and using remote work technology to reduce mixing and contact.
- Developing a policy or a procedures for immediate employment and completing any shortage in the workforce, if any.

7.4 Flexibility of Procedures:

- Setting a mechanism for the attendance of employees by the flexible hours and sick leave system.
- Giving authority to directors or line officials in remote centres to dismiss employees from their workplace to reduce staff density to prevent mixing and contact.

7.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Suppliers:

- Setting a mechanism for monitoring the suppliers and the system of their attendance in the organization.
- Evaluating suppliers and verifying the controls applied to them.
- Ensuring that all resources are provided when needed by suppliers and service providers as per the concluded contracts and agreements.

7.6 Supply Chain Readiness:

- Focus on supply chain management and supply network construction for service requirements.
- Coordination of activities with supply chains to ensure business continuity for the requirements of the organization.

8.0 Indicators of Remote Work Efficiency

- Employees' familiarity with how to use the technology of remote work.
- Mechanism to monitor employees' attendance and leave remotely.
- Electronic systems or procedures that enable activating means of communication and holding meetings remotely.
- Monitoring the status of tasks accomplished remotely.
- Daily reports of the level of work productivity.

9.0 Preparedness and Readiness Measurement Tools

9.1 Institutional Readiness form

	Institutional Readiness	
	Procedures	
	Remote Work Readiness Verification	
Notes	Employees	Yes/No
	Employees' familiarity with the required procedures upon readiness verification	
	Employees have already been involved in courses / exercises during which remote work technique has been activated	
	Do employees use technology to work remotely during normal situations?	
	The presence of technology and technical means for employees to do the work remotely (laptops, smart phones, tablets, etc.)	
	Have processes, vital functions and personnel in charge for them been identified?	
	Technology (infrastructure, hardware, software, knowledge)	
	Availability of remote computer-connection systems; (VPN), (Remote Desktop), etc.	
	Existence of a sufficient number of licenses for the remote work system as required for all concerned employees	
	Staff familiarity with the required technology when activation	
	Have the employees been introduced to these systems?	
	Existence of a written user guide / video on how to use the required technology	
	Possibility of using remote systems (system management)	
	Availability of a mechanism through which the attendance of employees can be recorded remotely	
	Existence of systems for holding meetings remotely	
	In case of power outages, the existence of a mechanism to restart equipment automatically	
	Staff can receive technical support remotely	

	Does the data center exist outside the organization?	
	Is the data center managed by a third party?	
Customer Service (if applicable)		
	Customers can receive the required services through smart platforms	
	The organization's smart services are ready and available to the public through websites or applications	
	Can all services be %100 automated for customers within one week, if they are not all ready?	
Examine preventive and precautionary measures		
Logistics Services		
	Are the facilities inside the institution sterilized as per the procedures set by the health authorities?	
	Is there a mechanism in place to clarify the health status of employees in the operational and service providers' companies?	
	Are there alternatives to contracts with operational and service providers?	
	Are the organization's transportation means (if any) sterilized as per the procedures set by health authorities?	
	Existence of places for temporary sanitary isolation if the need arises	
	Possibility of providing the necessary logistical support in all cases	
Preventive Measures		
	Have preventive measures been put in place to monitor suspected cases in cooperation with the relevant authorities?	
	Have public safety preventive measures been put in place	
	Have the preventive measures issued by the health authorities been circulated to the employees?	
	Are all employees familiar with preventive measures?	
	Activities of high and intense contact are suspended or cancelled	
	Involvement of the authorities in the process of monitoring, following up and reporting on the health status of the employees	
	Have the individuals concerned with the security and protection of the organizations been trained to ensure proper handling of any situation or suspicion?	
	Has coordination been made with specific hospitals in order to transfer the suspected cases (after isolation)?	
	Do all the employees in the organization have valid health insurance?	

9.2 Readiness of employees for remote work form

No	Name of Activity / Service	Activity Criticality Category	Total Staff	No of employees required to work from the workplace	No of employees for remote work	Remote work readiness	electronic system availability	Other requirement for remote work	Remarks
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									

Criticality category level	Criticality or risks level
Level 1	It must be recovered in less than 8 hours
Level 2	It must be recovered within 24-8 hours
Level 3	Minimum impact or risk, required within one or two days
Level 4	Medium term required within one week
Level 5	Medium term required within two week

10. References

Business Continuity Management Standard AE/SCNS/NCEMA 7000:2015

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