



Risk Control

Workforce Continuity

Workforce absentee rates may quickly rise to unacceptable levels during a public health outbreak, widespread flood, wildfire, labour dispute or other disruptive event. Business leaders are challenged to continue to develop and deliver their products and services when a large number of essential employees simply cannot come to work. Below are some considerations to help business leaders manage an impact to their most important asset.

Prepare in advance when possible:

1. Identify vital people-driven functions and processes.
2. Identify critical skills and training requirements.
3. Develop strategies to provide for continuity of operations during periods of high absentee rates.
 - a. Establish job rotations/training programs and find contract/temporary workforce alternatives.
 - b. Transfer work or resources
 - i. Remote work or use resources from another location to support key activities at affected site.
 - ii. Insource the work to another location.
 - iii. Outsource work where possible.
 - c. Increase inventory of key production components.
 - d. Alternate suppliers: Consider expanding key suppliers of goods and services, including distributors.
4. Update your business strategies and continuity plans to include continuity of workforce considerations.

Respond effectively during periods of high absenteeism:

1. Develop a mechanism to capture employee/contractor absence rates in real-time (daily).
2. Establish cross-functional response team to:
 - a. Monitor and manage key processes on a daily basis.
 - b. Develop company-wide strategies to support local service/production staff shortages, such as:
 - i. HR solutions to maximize use of available employees (e.g., increased wages/time off for overtime)
 - ii. Use of recent transfer and retired staff with required skills where possible
 - iii. Arranging safe transportation for essential staff
 - iv. Prioritization and adjustments for service/production activities to maximize use of available staff
 - v. Expanding the resource pool for critical operations
 - vi. Transferring work or resources to meet the need

When production/service delays or cancellations cannot be avoided, it is vital to clearly communicate any changes in your ability to deliver products and services. Refer to CNA's [Leadership Guidance for Response Team Decisions](#) to establish a team to manage your company-wide response and communicate with customers and stakeholders.

To learn more about how to help your clients manage risks and increase efficiencies, please contact CNA Risk Control or visit [cnacanada.ca](https://www.cnacanada.ca).