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28th April, 2020

To: All Member-Companies

Dear Esteemed Members,

COVID-19: A WORKPLACE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

INTRODUCTION

As the Corona Virus pandemic continues to ravage economies with consequential effects on businesses, there are concerted global efforts to contain the Virus and flatten the curve. Nations are also putting in place strategies to commence economic activities.

Your Association, Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association has developed a Guideline, identifying potentially applicable standards and general precautions. This Guideline is aimed at assisting member-companies to take precautionary measures to prevent the contamination of their Workplace when the lock-down is relaxed and business activities resume. The Guideline (which is not exhaustive), could be used exclusively or as part of other precautionary Protocols already put in place by your Organization.

PRE-RESUMPTION PROTOCOLS

In preparation for resumption of business activities, it is expected that the business/work area would be free from all hazards that could expedite the spread of the Virus. Actions to take could include, but not limited to:

- Fumigation of entire office area.
- Cleaning of all surfaces, work-tools, general areas (Reception, car parks, rest rooms, etc.).
- Establishment of hand-wash/disinfecting area for visitors, clients and vendors.
- Audit of HR Policies and Establishment of strict Protocols:
 - Employee Travel Policy
 - Work Arrangement Policies (Work from Home, Teleworking, Staggered resumption time, Flexi-hours, tele-conferencing, resumption/closing time, Social Distancing in the office, etc.)
 - Personal Protective Equipment (face mask, gloves, etc.) Policy
 - General Workplace Hygiene Policy, etc.

While all employees should continue to practice social distancing and personal hygiene, employers also need to take additional measures to protect the workplaces and employees, who are providing essential services.

We urge Employers to review and revisit all work-related policies in their organizations.

WORK RESUMPTION PROTOCOLS

Communication

- Communicate new/reviewed policies to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace in simple and unambiguous manner. Follow-up to ensure that the Policies are understood by employees.
- Increase communication to staff and customers about COVID-19 and measures you are taking for prevention.
- Post signs asking ill clients or customers to stay away from the workplace.
- Post signs encouraging good respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, and other healthy practices.

Social Distancing between Internal and External Clients

- Evaluate the workplace for areas where people have frequent contact with each other and objects. Ensure increase in frequency of cleaning in these areas.
- Consider ways that employees can practice social distancing, such as increased workstation spacing.
- Consider minimizing interactions between customers and your employees, such as limiting the number of customers permitted in your establishment or serving customers over the phone. Ideally, distancing as advised by WHO should be maintained, unless there is a physical barrier. Special attention should be given to your Reception area and other areas with high visitors' traffic
- Ensure there are not more than 2 or 4 people inside a lift and if necessary, switch off your lift entirely. The lift is a breeding-ground for the virus.
- Encourage collaboration via phone, intercom and other online means.
- Provide the necessary facilities and cleaning products to maintain a clean and safe workplace
- Provide access to hand-washing facilities and place hand sanitizing dispensers in prominent locations throughout the workplace.
- Ensure that high traffic work areas or frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more often. Ensure that cleaning supplies are available for employees to clean and disinfect their workspaces.

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Mr. Mauricio Alacron
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Dr. Timothy Olawale

- Provide employees with necessary personal protective equipment recommended by Government guidelines and training to ensure it is used correctly. Non usage should attract strict penalties.
- Ensure everyone entering into your office premises or the workplace has a face mask on.

Employee Commuting, Sick Leave and Reporting Procedures

- Consider relaxing sick leave policies and determine Protocol for reporting any form of symptom noticed by employees in the workplace.
- For employees that utilize public transportation to work, considerable flexible hours could be allowed to avoid peak travel periods.
- If available or affordable, the use of staff bus could reduce the challenge of transportation.
- Encourage co-commuting among employees with cars and those without.
- Prepare for increases in absenteeism due to illness among employees and their families.
- Establish a channel for employees to report self or other colleagues showing symptoms of illness.

COMMUNICATION TO EMPLOYEES

- All employees should ensure they understand and comply with the prevention policies and practices in the workplace.
- Keep your environment clean
- Use appropriate disinfectants to clean items like your desk, work surface, phones, keyboards and electronics, cash registers, keypads, elevator buttons, customer service counters and restaurant tables more often, especially when visibly dirty.
- Keep your Physical distance
- Keep a distance of at least 2 metres between you, your coworkers, and customers.
- Reduce activities that require close physical proximity or contact with people, such as team meetings, etc.
- Limit contacts closer than 2 metres to the shortest time possible.
- Avoid visiting crowded areas and public gatherings.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Wash (at least for 20 second) and sanitize your hands as often as possible.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow.
- As advised by The WHO, avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth.\
- Always carry an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Always wear a mask. Keep a spare handy.

- Avoid eating out as much as possible.
- When possible, avoid public transport.
- Avoid hugs and shaking hands
- Where possible, avoid cash transactions & encourage e-payments.
- Use your elbow to press the buttons on the elevator or to open doors.

If you have a symptom of COVID-19

- If you think you might have COVID-19, strictly follow your office Protocol.
- It is critical that if you have one symptom of COVID-19 (fever, cough or difficulty breathing), or even mild symptoms, you should stay home to avoid spreading illness to others.
- If you develop even mild symptoms while at your workplace, separate yourself from others and go home, avoiding use of public transport (e.g. buses, taxi, etc.) if possible.
- Contact your HR or NCDC and follow their advice.

We wish you all the best as we look forward to business resumption.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Timothy Olawale

Director General

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