

Top 10 Pandemic Planning Tips for Businesses

disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au

1. Follow the recommended advice from Queensland Health

- Wear a face mask.
- Get vaccinated, get a booster and have your vaccination certificate readily accessible.
- Practice social distancing and personal hygiene measures.
- Use the Check In QLD app to assist with contact tracing.
- Stay home if you are unwell or have been exposed to someone who is unwell.

2. Prepare a Business Emergency Kit

Do you have an Emergency Kit on hand for your business? The items you require in your kit may vary depending on the size of your business and operational requirements. Refer to our Business Emergency Kit Checklist to guide you in preparing your kit.

3. Identify your key business activities

Which activities need to keep going?

Which activities can you STOP doing and how long can you do without them?

If you stop doing certain activities, what will the impact be further down the line?

4. Look at your staffing levels

Have you already experienced a reduction in staff?
How many staff do you require as a minimum to carry out your key business activities?

Can you get additional staff in from somewhere else? What skillsets or expertise do they require to do certain roles?

5. Determine what you need to continue doing business

What critical systems do you require access to?

What critical resources or supplies do you require to continue doing your job?

Do you have a back-up supply available or arrangements in place to have your essential resources resupplied?

Remember – other businesses may have the same arrangements in place, so be sure to get in early with requests to your suppliers.

6. Put contingency measures in place

What measures can you implement to help keep your business operating? Here are some examples:

- Change your operating hours to suit staff availability.
- Stagger shifts to avoid cross-over of potentially unwell personnel.
- Reduce the number of staff working together in close quarters or travelling together in vehicles. Consider implementing a “buddy system” if you have a mix of vaccinated/unvaccinated staff in the workplace.
- Consider your remote working capability (i.e. work from home or an alternative facility and the resources necessary to support this).
- Identify alternative systems/processes for ensuring staff and clients are paid and how you will communicate with them regarding changes.
- Identify alternative methods for protecting sensitive data or records if your primary systems are unavailable.

Are you a hospitality operator? Here are some things to consider:

- Transition to take-away or delivery services (or partnering with a delivery service company).
- Use handsfree QR codes, online bookings/purchases, credit card payments and electronic ordering systems.
- Implement periodic Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) to ensure the safety of your staff and your customers.
- Review your cancellation policies and ensure these are visible for customers during the booking process. Also ensure any affiliate booking agents are aware of any changes to your cancellation policy.

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7. Tap into your professional networks

Disaster management is all about relationships. What other businesses or organisations, or even your customers can support you with delivering services or providing resources?

Are there ways you can assist them as well?

8. Communicate, communicate, communicate

- Maintain transparency with your staff and your customers by ensuring communication is two-way and ongoing.
- Update your staff, supplier and client contact lists periodically.
- Utilise a range of communications platforms (e.g. social media, website, bulk SMS systems, e-mail, phone, etc.). Ensure these systems are tested regularly and functioning efficiently.
- Where possible, try to use online platforms to stay engaged with your audiences (e.g. virtual tours, webinars, Facebook Live events, Instagram reels, etc.)
- Remember to update your hours of operation on your website / social media / Google / ATDW (tourism operators) as required. Also be sure to update relevant industry bodies about changes to your operations.
- Have you heard the saying “No news is good news”? Sometimes hearing nothing is a sign that information is not effectively getting through to the people that need it. If this is something you have noticed, try a different approach or system to get your messaging across.

9. Learn from others

Are there other businesses in your industry who are already implementing these preparedness measures and doing it well?

Do they have processes and/or templates that they are willing to share? Don't recreate the wheel. Utilise existing resources where you can, and amend them to suit your business needs as required.

10. Stay informed

Make informed decisions based on current and accurate advice. Know where to find the latest information on:

- COVID restrictions, testing information, quarantine measures
- Weather updates, road conditions, power outages
- Emergency updates, school closures

Want to learn more? Check out these useful websites for more helpful tips and resources:

<https://disaster.townsville.qld.gov.au>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/covid-ready>

<https://www.getready.qld.gov.au/get-prepared/business>

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/>