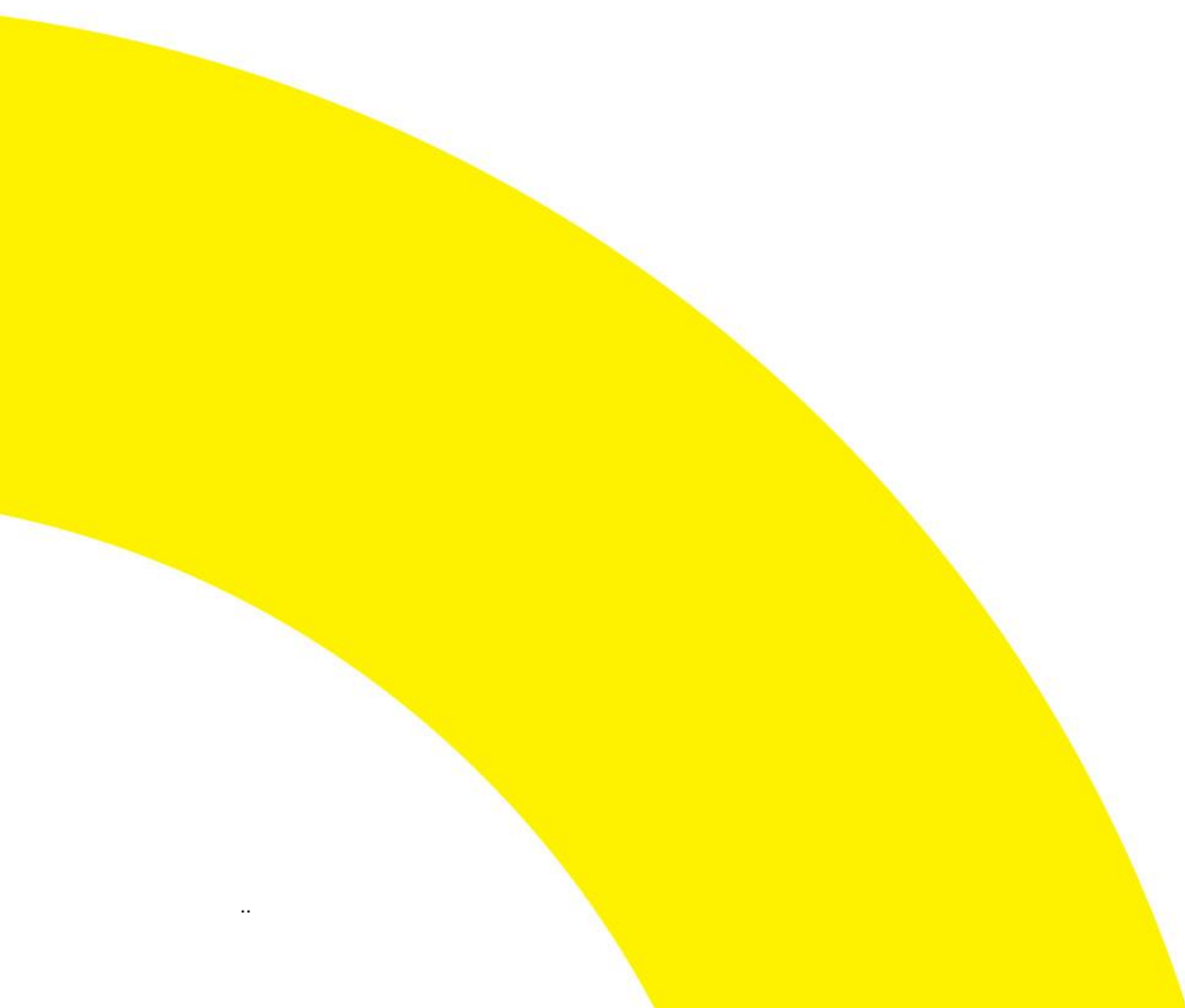


COVID-19 rapid response checklist



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With COVID-19 continuing to dominate headlines and guidance changing daily, the time to act is now. This rapid response checklist can help you create a plan to provide the right support for employees.

1. Your people need to hear from YOU.

The headlines are nonstop, and it's hard to know what's accurate and what isn't. Cut through the noise with clear, transparent and frequent communication to ensure the right details are reaching employees at the right time.

- Establish a **centralized, primary channel for communication**—such as a coronavirus webpage accessible to both employees who are in your company's network and those who may be at home—so they know where to go for timely updates. Update it often as circumstances change.
- Assemble a dedicated **task force** in your organization to lead your response efforts. Designate a leader who will sponsor communications and share frequent updates.

Key considerations

Here's what to think about now to help your employees navigate the uncertainty:

- Emergency response and communication plan
- Remote work policy and site closures
- Leave policies and medical coverage during leaves
- Paid time off
- Medical plans
- ACA impact of changes in scheduled hours

2. Review and then communicate key policies to help employees stay informed and feel empowered.

Understanding your company policies can help employees plan time away for their families and make other necessary arrangements to take care of themselves. In addition to making sure these policies are up to date and accessible to employees, consider any new or temporary policies you may need to enact to better support your response to COVID-19. Communicate those changes and summarize key points for employees so they don't have to decipher a policy, or worse, misinterpret what they have at their disposal.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time off | <input type="checkbox"/> FMLA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sick leave | <input type="checkbox"/> Commuter/ancillary benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability (STD and LTD) | <input type="checkbox"/> Expat/inpat resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bereavement | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel advisories |

3. Consider special audiences and circumstances, and target your outreach.

A diverse workforce requires thoughtful consideration and, in many cases, targeted communication.

- Think about the unique needs of each population in your organization and proactively include them in your response plan, ensuring that you anticipate and cover their concerns:
 - Global audiences
 - Expats and inpats
 - Commuters
 - Virtual employees
 - “Front-line” employees
 - Salaried vs. hourly employees
 - Employees on leave or disability
 - Retiree communities
- Keep in mind that different work sites and geographies may require specific guidance. Identify a point person at each location who can help share updates with employees.
- In addition to thinking through the segments of your workforce, be sure to think through the concerns employees will have for the roles they have outside of work:
 - Spouse/partner
 - Parent/guardian of school-aged children (including college students)
 - Caretaker of family member (particularly those at greater risk)
 - Community member

4. Be ready for questions—and be prepared to answer them.

No matter what, employees will have questions. Managers serve the important role of being the “face” of your organization, and employees trust them. They are best positioned to bring the human element to the situation.

- Empower your managers with talking points, FAQs and additional support to stay on message as they do this important work.
- Provide additional information to benefits and HR call center representatives.
- Reach out to vendor partners, particularly medical carriers and other benefits providers, to inventory any communications they are providing.
- Urge employees to review all of the information they receive.

5. Anticipate the questions employees will have about the impacts on their pay and benefits.

From understanding their medical coverage to needing access to additional support for managing stress, it's essential to connect employees to information about their pay, benefits and other programs that they may need to navigate the current situation.

- Make sure they **know where to go** to answer these questions about:
 - **Medical benefits:** What's my medical coverage? How am I covered if I (or a dependent) get sick? How can I get care? Will any of my spending accounts reimburse me for care or supplies?
 - **Pay:** How do I access my pay statements from home? If I can't work, will I get paid?
 - **Retirement benefits:** Do I need to change my contribution or investment strategy? Can I take a loan or withdrawal out for emergencies? Should I change my investment strategy or stay focused on the long term?
 - **Family care:** Schools are closing in my area—where can I get back-up care? I'm caring for a family member that has symptoms or has been diagnosed with COVID-19—are there any additional resources for me?
 - **Voluntary benefits:** Do I have access to voluntary benefits such as the EAP, back-up child and elder care, and financial wellness resources? I am feeling overwhelmed and need some help managing my stress—can the EAP help me? Isolation and social distancing can exacerbate mental health conditions and add to stress, so reminding employees that they have access to support is critical at this time. Many employees may not ordinarily value or use the EAP and other voluntary benefits, so this is a great opportunity to remind them.
- Many of these benefit scenarios will be complex, so work with your program managers and other experts to help prioritize needs and communicate appropriately.

6. Help employees maximize their benefits as they prepare.

In addition to breaking policies down to be more digestible, help your employees cut through the clutter to take concrete action. Ensure your employees know how to put their benefits to work for them during a crisis. Encourage them to use available digital tools for help. For example:

- ❑ **Medical plan:** Insurance carriers are starting to announce they are covering “medically necessary” COVID-19 testing free of charge and/or waiving or increasing limits for prescription refills. Research these options on behalf of employees and communicate.
 - **Telemedicine:** Most employees have access to telemedicine or a nurse line via their employer or their medical plan. Encourage employees to enroll now instead of waiting until they need to limit contact due to being symptomatic or to avoid exposure.
 - **Students away at school:** Support parents with students away at school by reminding them to research local urgent care centers or emergency rooms in advance. Also, encourage parents to enroll their students in telemedicine.
- ❑ **Prescription refills:** Suggest that employees inventory their medication and ensure they have at least enough to last the recommended 14-day quarantine period. Promote your prescription drug mail order pharmacy as a practical and easy option. If employees need help getting a prescription refilled before it’s “due” (generally more than 5–10 days prior), they may need to ask the pharmacist, doctor or prescription drug carrier for an exception.
- ❑ **Employee Assistance Plan (EAP):** Promote EAP resources to help support mental health and emotional support needs during this time of heightened stress, and for employees who are dealing with or are worried about the virus.
- ❑ **Emergency/back-up child and elder care:** Make sure employees who have children or elderly family members are aware of any back-up care options you offer. In the event of school or other community resource closures, employees may need to find alternative care options quickly.

7. Take this opportunity to build trust.

Now is a valuable opportunity to live your company’s values, build trust with your employees and offer peace of mind. Don’t hesitate to take a strong stance—even if it’s less than perfect, employees want to know that you care and have thoughtfully considered a course of action. And, while it’s important to leverage guidance and clinical information from expert organizations like the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization and local health departments, employees will appreciate clear direction and leadership.

We're here to help

We know it's a lot to think about and the situation is complex and fluid. Your Alight team, including Consumer Experience experts, are ready to help you communicate through channels we may already support, or craft the right strategy to support your workforce at this critical time. We're in this together and ready to [help](#).

About Alight

Alight Solutions is a leading provider of integrated benefits, payroll and cloud solutions. With more than 15,000 professionals across 29 countries, Alight provides leading-edge benefits administration and ERP technology and services to more than 3,250 clients including 50% of the Fortune 500. Alight's combination of data-driven insights and technology expertise creates unique value for clients. Alight is a six-time member of IAOP's Global Outsourcing 100. Learn how Alight drives better business outcomes and employee wellbeing for organizations of all sizes at alight.com.

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