

WSH Forum for Facilities Management 2021

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WSH and COVID-19 Challenges in Facilities Management

by

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1) Introduction

- With current COVID-19 situation, greater responsibilities for both property owners, and property and facility managers
- Need to introduce safe management and operations practices to protect wellness and safety of occupants and visitors in the work environment.
- Challenges in implementation because of existing building design, and other operational difficulties besides coping with manpower requirements and continual operations.
- This paper will discuss challenges in design and planning of the building and services, managing the cleaning and maintenance operations as well as planning for business continuity

2) Challenges in planning and design of buildings and services

- a) Building access need to be restricted and controlled. What are the issues?
- ✓ Use of contactless identification systems to verify entry and exit for buildings
 - ✓ Design access points and choose entrances/exits served by automatic doors to minimise body contact
 - ✓ Need to change human traffic flow, entrances and exits as required
 - Recommendation - need to figure out the best traffic flow yet with due regard to fire safety and other considerations

b) On building design, need to consider space requirements and interior layout.

- ✓ Where possible, workspaces should be reconfigured to enable appropriate spacing between workstations.
- ✓ Use barriers to minimise transmission of airborne pathogens.
- ✓ Review internal layout and select suitable locations for installing sanitising dispensers etc.
- Recommendation - conduct an evaluation to identify gaps in the building's readiness for safe operations.

c) Building Services. What are the issues?

- ✓ Ensure adequate indoor air quality
- ✓ Ensure building systems are operating correctly
- ✓ May have to adjust operational settings of building management system that controls various systems in a building, including the ACMV, electrical, access control, security systems and other interrelated systems
- Recommendation – need to figure out the best way to achieve an internal environment that is well ventilated and safe

3) Managing the cleaning and maintenance operations

a) Cleaning is an important consideration in a pandemic. What are the issues?

- ✓ Cleaning procedures – surface or air cleaning
- ✓ How to protect cleaning staff?
- ✓ Assessment of cleanliness and quality control
- Recommendation – develop a cleaning strategy on disinfection methods and substance selected, cleaning operations itself, and management of environmental services.

b) On management and operations – consider safe distancing measures for common areas and lifts, wearing of masks, designated areas for courier and food deliveries, and crowd control. What are the issues?

- ✓ Screening procedures
- ✓ Managing medical and first aid rooms
- ✓ Reducing high touch points etc.
- ✓ Use of technology and integration within the building infrastructure.
- Recommendation - to adhere to various safe management measures

4) Planning for business continuity

- Is business continuity plan adequate for a pandemic situation. What are the issues?
- ✓ Implement measures on working from home, team rotation, control and containment.
- ✓ Need to provide for temporary shutdowns
- ✓ Prepare buildings and facilities left vacant and not occupied ready for re-occupation
- Recommendation - A strategic continuity plan to be implemented and adoption of gradual re-occupation when necessary

5) Concluding remarks

- Best practices on safe management measures necessary for safety and well-being of occupants and visitors.
- As pandemic situation evolves, need to adjust the measures to suit the circumstances.
- Management personnel, and property and facility managers to be able to introduce and implement measures to deal with the pandemic situation for their buildings and facilities.
- Familiarity with relevant advisories and technical references will be of benefit to make the workplace safe and healthy.

Thank you