COVID-19 Emergency Planning and Financial Liquidity

Presentation by Jo Parker
The purpose of this presentation

- Help you prepare for issues you may meet with Covid 19
- Give you skills you can use for other emergency or unplanned situations
- Help you to use your experiences to:
  - Manage day to day activities better
  - Develop case study of good practice to help get donors ‘on side’
  - Prepare you for ‘learning by doing’
- Help you prepare an Emergency Response Plan and budget for funding agencies
- Rockblue has been working with African water utilities to help them prepare Emergency Response Plans and can supply sample documentation
What is the Difference?

- Emergency Planning
  - Focuses on the risks and what you will do in response
- Business Continuity
  - Focuses on the business and what are the critical parts of the business
- This presentation will cover both as you need both!
A framework for Crisis Management

![Diagram of Crisis Management Framework]

**CEN/TS 17091**

Source: BSI – Crisis Management – Guidance for developing a strategic capability
Five Key Steps - 1

• Anticipate and assess
  • Normally this would include identification of potential risks and their impact
  • Here we’ll focus on Covid 19
  • Use any time before the major outbreak to
    • Collate information- develop fact sheets, credibility
    • Identify impacts
    • Establish contacts and communication lines
    • Prepare and be proactive
• Preparedness
  • What can you do in advance of the main impact?
    • Briefing staff, collecting equipment, developing plans
  • Write everything down – emergency plan
Five Key Steps - 2

• Response
  • Identify when to implement the plan – ‘triggers’
  • Implement the plan
  • Monitor the situation and respond
    • Uncertainty, exacerbation, future scenarios
    • What can you do to minimise the impact?
• Recovery
  • There will be an end to this – need to recognise that.
  • Identify triggers to allow de-escalation
  • How can you return to ‘normal’ as quickly as possible?
• Review
  • Learn from this experience and apply to other risks afterwards
Anticipate & Assess Possible Impacts of Covid 19 - staff

- Need to minimise risk of infection to all staff
- Key workers sick
- Some workers will work from home
- Key workers isolated
  - Caring for family
  - Government rules
  - Lack of transport
- Remaining staff over worked/over tired
Other impacts

• Need to minimise risk to customers
• Problems with key supplies (even more!)
• Problems with customer payments
  • Cash can bring contamination
  • Reading meters
  • Customers able to pay
  • Commercial customers
• Changes in demand patterns
• Shortages of water
Minimising Risk to staff

• Education, information and communication critical
• Generally water is a key activity – work needs to continue
• Even if on lockdown/home working now, think about when offices open
• Work procedures to minimise proximity
  • Keep customers at a distance e.g. Bill payments
  • Working from home
  • Split up teams so working singly
  • Move desks/provide barriers/movement
  • General education and staff bulletins
• Hand washing facilities – water and soap
• PPE
  • Explain importance and when it makes no difference!
  • Water is PPE
Minimising risk to staff – outside work

- Working from home
  - Can their productivity be maintained?
  - How will you measure their outputs?
  - How will you motivate them?
  - How will you keep in touch and communicate?
- Transport to and from work
- Think about their families as well
  - Self isolation
  - High risk occupations
  - Shopping
Key workers sick or isolated

• Identify critical activities
  • What MUST be done
    • Water treatment operation? Pumping?
    • Can anything be deferred? What is the impact?
      • Meter reading? Cleaning or maintenance?
      • Construction/repairs?
  • Identify critical workers
    • How do you normally cover for them?
    • Skills
    • Knowledge
      • How much is written down? Document NOW
      • An opportunity to write/update manuals/SOPs
How will you cover for critical staff?

- Can the supervisors/managers do the work?
  - Will their skills need refreshing?
- Can other staff be trained in some tasks?
- Can contractors do the work?
- Make a table
  - key roles
  - who currently does it
  - Who else could do it
  - Training or documentation required to cover
- Whatever actions can be taken, do them NOW whilst the key workers are still here
Staff welfare

- Ensure staff don’t get over tired
  - Relief at all levels (including for yourselves!)
- Temporary accommodation
  - Minimise transport
  - Minimise contact with possibly infected friends and family
- Ensure regular meals (shopping puts people at risk)
Other risks

- Ensure customers can pay without risking themselves or staff
  - Bank transfers
  - Card payments
  - Some sub-contractors offer this service
- Check with suppliers
  - What are they doing?
  - Can you help them prepare?
  - Energy supplies may be problematical
- What contingency plans can you make?
  - Alternative supplies e.g. Bleaching powder instead of chlorine
  - Collect rather than have goods delivered (or vice versa)
- Cash flow – what happens if customers can’t pay?
Help minimise general rates of infection

- Special customer communication
  - Importance of hygiene and hand washing
  - Not just water – soap as well
  - Not just people – anything they touch – food, clothes etc.
- Locations where water availability an issue
  - Bowsers
  - Water tanks
  - Any temporary water container
Document the plan

- Write down all the contingency measures
  - Don’t over complicate things
  - Don’t over manage
- Communicate to all staff
- Reassurance rather than alarmist
- Define lines of management
  - With and without staff missing
- Define methods and responsibilities of communication during the incident
  - Decision makers, specialists, politicians, crisis team, staff, customers, suppliers, media, incident logs
- What will it cost?
  - Go through requirements – explain assumptions
  - Stick to essentials
  - Think about time constraints
The following tools and templates can support the crisis management plan:

- identification of current and potential new sources of relevant information;
- aides-memoire, standard agendas, and checklists of key decision points and required actions;
- defined roles and responsibilities;
- draft holding statements;
- guidance for call takers and switchboards;
- up-to-date fact sheets and press kits;
- a list of items necessary for a practical response;
- tools and systems to help manage social media monitoring and engagement;
- a list of interested parties and a management matrix;
- 24/7 contact information for resources, including spokespeople; and
- locations for press conferences.

Source: BSI – Crisis Management – Guidance for developing a strategic capability
Communication

- Communication is critical
- Don’t over complicate and don’t over report
- Identify who manages different communication to different groups
  - Key messages
- Identify best forms of communication
  - Minimise contact e.g. Zoom meetings/Whatsapp
  - What to do if key communication channels lost
  - Different stakeholders, different messages
    - E.g. staff, customers and decision makers
- Two way
  - Trust operational staff - allow them to do their job
  - Managers may not always hold the solutions!
Implement the plan

• Keep calm & address problems as they arise
• Identify an overall incident manager and team
• Identify an overall incident document controller
• Hold regular briefings to assess the situation
  • Decide on a regular time and day for briefings
  • Adjust frequency according to how quickly things change
  • Better to have frequent short check-ins than risk leaving someone unsupported
• Assume the incident is likely to run for some time – UK started lockdown nearly 4 months ago
• You won’t get everything right – accept that and learn
Update the plan as and when you can

- Unidentified impacts
- Changes in government policies
- Improved ways of handling issues
- Mistakes
  - people will make them
  - this is not about blame
  - Make it an opportunity to learn
- If necessary ask all to keep a note of what they’d do differently
  - Collate these afterwards when to time to review
When the incident is over

- Identify a point in advance when emergency procedures can be terminated – trigger point
- Ensure all staff aware that it’s back to business as normal
- Say thank you to all those who deserve it
- Have a management brainstorm
  - What went well
  - Even better if.....
- Ensure all lessons learned are captured
- Write up the incident as a report
Make use of the learning

- Use the report/learning points
  - Identify better ways of working for the future
  - To improve emergency planning and business continuity for the future
  - Demonstrate your ability to manage under difficult circumstances
    - to decision makers
    - to potential donors
  - Build team spirit
Thank you and good luck