INTERNATIONAL SOS

7 CONSIDERATIONS
TO HELP KEEP YOUR BUSINESS AND PEOPLE SAFE IN 2021

Duty of Care

Organisations will need to go through an evolution in their Duty of Care provisions. Just as 9/11 changed the way that employers saw their Duty of Care with respect to security issues, so the pandemic is destined to have a lasting change to employer approach to employee health threats.

- Multiple stakeholders responsible for Duty of Care will need to communicate regularly and effectively

- It is imperative that organisations document the changes they make to their duty of care protocols (including travel policies, safe return to work strategies etc)

- Design Configurable Communications systems and communicate risks and mitigation procedures with employees effectively

- Mental health support, a safe travel policy, vaccination policies and a safe return to work strategy need to be considered in your Duty of Care in 2021.

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Mental Health Challenges

Did you know that mental health issues are predicted* to be amongst the top five operational challenges for organisations in 2021?

- Employee productivity and motivation are likely to decrease as the pandemic continues

- Employers will need to provide emotional support to employees as well as resources to support their challenges

- Key stakeholders across the business will need to effectively communicate with employees and keep them informed of the latest developments.

*Risk Outlook 2021 business resilience survey Ipsos MORI on behalf of International SOS

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Timely and Accurate Information

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to transform the world and risks that impact your business and employees. The value of reliable information and intelligence is essential in making informed business decisions and updating key stakeholders and employees.

• This information helps to shape your return to operations policies, minimising the risks to your employees and business

• Stay on top of global developments and how it could impact your operations

• Accurate Information can help to reduce uncertainty and support stress management. Providing this information can help to reassure your workforce.

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Security Implications & COVID-19 Myopia

To varying degrees, the general population and business are more focussed on the demands and application of COVID-19 related precautions. However, perennial security and safety issues have not subsided. In many locations, the security environment is heightened.

- COVID-19 has diversely impacted security environments, presenting new challenges for companies' risk managers and other stakeholders looking after their workforce's resilience, both while travelling internationally and at their domestic location.

- Crime levels have increased in some locations, heightening the security risks employees may face

- Civil unrest and protests continue throughout many countries, as citizens protest lockdowns and government responses.

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A Vaccination Strategy

Availability and roll out of any COVID-19 vaccine is an area of great interest given the impact the pandemic is having on the global economy and on the business as a whole. Benefits of a corporate vaccine strategy include:

- Active participation in the global push towards vaccination. To facilitate the development of community / company herd immunity

- There is a net positive effect for offering vaccinations as a corporate, especially in pandemic situations. Where access to vaccinations is limited this can also be helpful. We saw this with H1N1 swine flu

- The ability to achieve immunity from infection will allow more business activities to resume.

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COVID-19 Testing

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused organisations to face unprecedented challenges in sustaining their operations. In this new norm, meeting Duty of Care requirements can be especially difficult. Key challenges our clients have been facing include:

- Defining and enforcing appropriate quarantine and/or social distancing measures while minimising the negative impact on employees and operations

- Understanding government guidelines around testing and travel, and how to reduce quarantine time pre and post quarantine

- Rapidly identifying and isolating those infected by COVID-19 to protect the workforce

- Managing return to work protocols for employees recovering from illness Multiple other challenges.

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Return to Travel Policy

Your travel policy is an important part of your Duty of Care framework. Once a vaccine will start to become available and rapid testing will be offered in certain places, business travel for non-essential workers might become a reality again.

- A higher level of oversight and planning is needed for every trip, not just for trips to high risk locations.Medical and security triggers to signify the engagement of travel

- Considerations such as access to long term accommodation if a lockdown is announced, selecting the right mode of transport, access to medical care and itinerary planning all need to be considered

- Reassuring employees and gaining confidence as travel resumes. Some travellers will be very eager to start travelling again, while others might prefer to wait a bit longer. Organisations need to start thinking about adapting their travel policy.

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