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Addressing COVID-19 Related Complaints and Reporting

By the Security Executive Council

Businesses continue to reopen under new and changing guidelines for mitigating the spread of COVID-19, even as cases spike in many regions. As employees and visitors re-enter the workplace, they are undoubtedly anxious about the new normal and what they will need to know to avoid the risk of infection.

Organizations need to be prepared to respond to questions and concerns about new risk mitigation procedures and protocols. They also need to outline the channels for communicating any observations, concerns, or suggestions regarding personal protective equipment use, screening, distancing, sanitization, and other related topics.

Businesses must also outline the steps they will take to address the non-compliance of the newly implemented procedures, many of which are required by local, state, or federal guidelines.

Here are some basic questions to consider.

What must every employee and visitor know?

- The details of each new policy/guidelines and what each person must do to be compliant.
- The responsibility of each person for reporting a concern that might lead to contamination.
- The steps the company will take if a person is observed or said to be acting outside of the policies/guidelines.

- Any reporting requirements (in or outside the company) the business must meet in accordance with regulatory guidelines.

Information regarding new risk mitigation measures must be provided to all who enter your buildings. Will your company require a formal acknowledgment from all employees and visitors entering your property? What about in leased space? If your company has organized labor unions, consider sharing any new procedures or controls with union representatives ahead of time to avoid unforeseen challenges.

How will you receive questions, concerns, and complaints?

- Reporting hotline
- GSOC
- Online form
- Phone call
- E-mail
- Private meeting

Ensure that incoming concerns or questions are fully documented; any records could be subject to disclosure if legal proceedings follow. Also, consider providing a statement about whether anonymity can be provided.

Who will respond to questions, concerns, and complaints?

- Security alone
- HR alone
- Individual function leaders
- A multidisciplinary team of responsible parties
- Outside third party

Include as much transparency in your response protocols as possible. Proactively state what you will and will not share about reports received, knowing that many employees and visitors will be anxious about rumored concerns that get further socialized at work. No feedback is often understood as "no action taken."

How will complaints be resolved if confirmed by interview or investigation?

- Verbal reprimand
- Escalating written warnings
- Termination
- Removal from property

Outline the process, steps, and documentation maintained. If security is involved in enforcement, it is critical that HR or other responsible functions support the process with well-defined procedures for disciplinary action.

How will the response and resolution plan be communicated?

- Posters
- Emails/Company newsletter
- Link on company intranet
- Verbal reminders
- New hire orientation
- Company town halls

The response and resolution plan must be clearly and broadly articulated to the visitor and employee population. Make it clear employees have a responsibility to report concerns and identify any reporting requirements the business must meet in accordance with regulatory guidelines.

Your response and communication processes are essential to ensure that employees and visitors have confidence in the team responsible for responding to concerns and maintaining compliance with regulatory guidelines.

[Visit our COVID-19 resource page](#) for other proven safety and security resources and tools that can help with your COVID response and recovery strategies.

Visit the Security Executive Council web site to view more resources in the [Program Best Practices : Policies and Guidelines](#) series.

About the Security Executive Council

The SEC is the leading research and advisory firm focused on corporate security risk mitigation solutions. Having worked with hundreds of companies and organizations we have witnessed the proven practices that produce the most positive transformation. Our subject matter experts have deep expertise in all aspects of security risk mitigation strategy; they collaborate with security leaders to transform security programs into more capable and valued centers of excellence. Watch our [3-minute video](#) to learn more.

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