

# Pandemic Planning

October 5, 2009

*Toronto College Park*

Dear Tenants,

## **Re: Pandemic Planning**

As you are likely aware, the World Health Organization (“WHO”) raised the level of influenza pandemic alert in June 2009 from Phase 5 to Phase 6 due to the spread of H1N1 flu virus throughout the world. Given the circumstances, we believe it is mutually beneficial at this time to revisit our ongoing communications with you concerning the following:

- Our pandemic planning process
- The purpose of our planning
- The impact on services to the building that any pandemic situation may have
- The importance for tenants to ensure that they have their own pandemic plans in place to ensure the continuity of their own businesses

## **A – PANDEMIC PLANNING PROCESS**

In March 2006, eight major Canadian real estate owners and managers, including GWL Realty Advisors, formed the National Industry Pandemic Planning Task Force (“Task Force”), in association with the Building Owners and Managers Association Canada (“BOMA”). The Task Force prepared and issued a Pandemic Planning Guide for Commercial Buildings (“Guide”) available to building owners and managers at [www.boma.org](http://www.boma.org). The Guide is not binding upon any building owner or manager but has been recommended as a tool for building owners and managers to consider in the preparation of their own Pandemic Preparedness plans. This Task Force remains active regarding ongoing pandemic concerns and how they relate to commercial building operations. GWL Realty Advisors is committed to the purpose of this continuing initiative.

As previously communicated GWL Realty Advisors has created pandemic plans for our properties based upon the Guide. While we monitor world events as reported by the WHO and their response, our actions are triggered to a great extent by a declaration of a Pandemic, impacting us at a local level and any resulting employee/service provider absenteeism.

## **B - PURPOSE OF OUR PLANNING**

In the event of a pandemic impacting us at a local level, the intended purpose of our pandemic planning process is two-fold,

- (1) To identify challenges and practical solutions to continue to operate commercial building systems and services in the event of staff and service provider absenteeism.
- (2) To attempt to use reasonable efforts to permit all or part of the building to remain in operation during a pandemic event.

## **C - PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

At the property level, building owners and managers consider many items, including but not limited to the following:

- Service provider status on pandemic planning
- Service provider plan specifics and how they relate to maintaining service levels
- Identification of specific or highly specialized skills requiring cross training of staff
- Multiple service level scenarios at varying levels of absenteeism
- Critical building tasks which can be completed remotely
- Communication process during a pandemic

- Identification of realistic service prioritization
- Methods to allow staff to remain on the job safely
- Emergency stockpile of critical supplies

## **D - WHAT TENANTS SHOULD NOT EXPECT**

Our company culture is built around customer service and we endeavour to fulfill your service expectations at all times. The reality is that in the event of a pandemic impacting us at local level, we too may be faced with many new situations rapidly changing from one day to the next. Please be assured we will endeavour to stay true to the purpose of our planning process (Part B) and will communicate the status of building services (see Appendix A attached) as they are affected by absenteeism. Unfortunately, it is unlikely we will have any practical ability to increase our scope of services and caution you against relying on this as part of your pandemic planning process. Our planning assumptions indicate that service levels will probably decrease, as opposed to increasing.

**Visitor Screening** - The Task Force has recommended that building owners and managers not screen visitors to buildings on behalf of tenants. The main reasons for this decision are: medical advice indicating that symptoms (depending on the virus) may not show for 24 to 48 hours after the individual has contracted the disease, but that individuals could nevertheless be contagious; screening will require people to congregate in close proximity (for example a building lobby) at a time when social distancing is being encouraged; and building staff are not necessarily qualified to undertake such screening. In addition to these reasons, GWL Realty Advisors believes such actions are contrary to our purpose identified in Part B.

**Monitoring & Communication of Known Incidents of Illness** – The Task Force has recommended that building owners and managers not attempt to track, log and communicate incidents of illness in the building for many practical reasons. Such an initiative may also be potentially intrusive to the privacy of individuals. In the event that a pandemic is declared by governmental officials, you may have statutory obligations to report any incidence of illness to the Director of Public Health or other governmental representatives. You should ensure that you are familiar with your obligations in this regard.

**Sanitization of Buildings** – As part of a pandemic impacting us at a local level or otherwise, it is likely that confirmed cases will surface in buildings. If we are made aware of this information, direction will be sought from Public Health authorities in determining what sanitization, if any, is required in the building. Recognizing that absenteeism will play a direct role in our ability to perform any additional cleaning tasks, this responsibility may need to be reassigned to the occupants as part of maintaining the cleanliness of their respective work spaces. Further, many surfaces commonly touched by individuals such as office equipment, key boards and telephones are not part of the building cleaning services. Therefore, sanitation of these items or other specialized equipment in your space would be your responsibility at all times.

**Increased Cleaning Staff** – While the building cleaners will concentrate on touch points during periods of local community illness concerns or a pandemic, additional spot cleaning of surfaces is not necessarily a practical or highly effective solution to controlling the spread of illness. It is widely recognized by Public Health authorities that proper hand-washing is the *single most effective method* of preventing the spread of illness. The use of hand sanitizers appears to be a good alternative or supplement. Requests for more cleaning staff are difficult to accommodate for any one particular tenancy and could negatively impact the cleaning vendor's ability to service other areas of the building as absenteeism levels potentially increase during a local pandemic. You should ensure that you have your own supplies for the cleaning and sanitization of your premises for the purpose of continuing business operations during a potential pandemic event.

**Building Pandemic Plan** – We cannot provide a copy of our pandemic plan to you as it includes confidential operations information and personal contact data. However, we can provide elements of the plan relating to our assumptions and intentions during a pandemic situation. **(Refer to Appendix A regarding service level guidelines)**

## **E - COMMUNICATION DURING A PANDEMIC**

Similar to all companies, we are unsure what departments or service areas will be impacted by absenteeism, when and to what extent. We also recognize the potential speed of increasing absenteeism in work places due to illness or fear of

illness. Our ability to communicate in a typical manner during a pandemic may be impacted by our absenteeism levels and may also be impacted by absenteeism levels experienced in your company.

Therefore, our intended communication plan during a pandemic has been designed with three purposes in mind.

- (1) Effective for all occupants and visitors.
- (2) Simple and clear.
- (3) Allows for daily status updating.

The attached poster will be posted at service and lobby entrances during a declared local pandemic. Should absenteeism levels increase to 30% in any given service area, a yellow circle advising of 'impacted service due to absenteeism' will be posted over the regular service circle. This poster board will be updated daily, allowing your employees and visitors to understand which service areas are presently impacted that day. Other typical methods of communication will be maintained as staffing levels permit.

## **F - CRITICAL ACCESS**

In rare situations where we would be instructed by authorities to close all or part of the building or be unable to maintain operation for safety reasons, arrangements would commence to close all or part of the building to all access. Please consider these extreme but potential scenarios when completing your company plan. As a result, we request you confirm the names of two or three critical access individuals as persons that will potentially have limited access to the premises. Wherever safely possible and as permitted by authorities, we will endeavour to assist these individuals in preparing for a potential closure by allowing them temporary access.

## **G – SOME TENANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Develop your own emergency response and business continuity plans which include employee policies on absenteeism. These will not only assist during a pandemic, but during many other emergency occurrences. Unlike most disasters, a pandemic will affect people as opposed to infrastructure. It is estimated that between 25 to 35% of the general population could be ill at any time, over a period of 6 to 8 weeks. Based on past pandemic experience, experts tell us it is likely that we will experience two "waves" or outbreaks, some six to nine months apart. Consider extreme but possible scenarios that involve a closure of the building.
- You are encouraged to provide your employees with sanitizing products for their own work spaces, computers and telephones, or other personal protective equipment as deemed appropriate for individual business activities.
- The WHO recommends educating people about the importance of proper hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizing stations. Develop an employee awareness and education program.
- Building services are most likely to be affected including response times for operations personnel, security patrol coverage/lobby presence, and cleaning scope. For example, due to absenteeism, individuals may have to take responsibility for the cleanliness of their own offices and workstations, including their own common areas such as photocopy and mail rooms, reception, etc.
- While building owners and managers will monitor government announcements, we suggest that you ensure you have designated representatives that will also monitor the same. While reasonable efforts will be made to keep buildings open during a pandemic, in the event that Public Health authorities determine that it is necessary to close all or part of the building or a government order to shut-down is issued, arrangements will be made to do so. You should carefully consider, in advance, all alternative arrangements required to continue operating your business during such an eventuality.
- As mentioned previously, due to labour shortages, janitorial and security services are likely to be at their lowest

levels at a time when we might have hoped for them to be at the highest.

- Review your organization's position regarding visitor screening. GWL Realty Advisors does not intend to screen people entering the building but you may choose to establish your own screening process internal to your premises, if this is an integral part of your pandemic response plan.
- If, in a previous meeting regarding Pandemic Planning, you have determined that your plan requires a certain service or function to be performed by GWL Realty Advisors, it is important that your expectations be revisited with your building owner or manager in light of more recent developments respecting industry planning for pandemic.
- If your plan depends on the building owner or manager to perform any specific function for your company particularly if outside of normal operating hours during a pandemic impacting us at a local level, please discuss with us in advance to determine whether we are in a position to consider any such requests.
- To learn more about a pandemic situation, we direct you to the World Health Organization website at [www.who.org](http://www.who.org) the Public Health Agency of Canada at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

We appreciate your time once again in reviewing our planning process and would be pleased to discuss any questions you may have.

Yours truly,

Claudia Bate-Gonzalez  
Retail Marketing & Event Coordinator  
Toronto College Park  
[Claudia.bate-gonzalez@gwlra.com](mailto:Claudia.bate-gonzalez@gwlra.com)

## APPENDIX A

### REDUCED SERVICE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS GUIDELINES

Our site specific review included four main areas of property functions and service – Cleaning, Security, Property Management and Building Operations. All areas are potentially heavily impacted due to absenteeism.

Absenteeism Levels	Anticipated Conditions	Anticipated Service Delays
0% Absenteeism	Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status Quo</li> <li>• Continue periodic cross training</li> <li>• Hand sanitizing stations available</li> <li>• Seasonal flu prevention notices posted</li> </ul>
15% Absenteeism	Some adjustment periodic tasks and projects to accommodate staffing level – similar to vacation coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No noticeable impact to service levels at the properties</li> <li>• Cleaning focus on touch points, as opposed to periodic cleaning tasks.</li> </ul>
30% Absenteeism	Prioritizing of tasks – non critical tasks delayed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available security manpower assigned to cover all shifts if possible.</li> <li>• Periodic cleaning cancelled.</li> <li>• Nightly cleaning may involve rotating office cleaning.</li> <li>• Non-critical PM tasks delayed.</li> <li>• Non-essential equipment turned off to minimize monitoring/maintenance requirements.</li> </ul>
50% (up to 100%) Absenteeism	All Tasks prioritized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office cleaning rotated with prioritization escalating to waste and public washrooms only.</li> <li>• Reliance on tenants to clean their own offices/work stations.</li> <li>• Security patrols limited to high risk area's only i.e. Parking lots, vacant spaces, entrances.</li> <li>• Response delays to operational items with priority given to critical items.</li> <li>• Equipment may be turned off due to inability to safely operate.</li> </ul>
Building Closure	As directed by municipal authorities. As directed by Landlord for safety reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of building closure preparation. Timing contingent on situation.</li> </ul>