

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TENANT FAQ



Updated: March 25, 2020  
Guidance Document #3

How to respond to tough tenant questions.\*

\*Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and "Real Estate Operations in the Coronavirus Era" from Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP.

***As the recent COVID-19 outbreak continues to rapidly evolve, building owners and operators must implement emergency response plans, anticipate risks and provide thoughtful and timely responses to tenant questions. What follows are industry best practices, as well as sample language that might be helpful to use when communicating with building occupants. It is encouraged that individual building teams modify this language to reflect their particular property, the conditions in their area and other factors. The materials below do not contain formal legal advice or healthcare recommendations and may not be applicable to all properties; it is strongly recommended that you stay in contact with your local health officials and consult with your legal counsel on any crisis communications.***

## PANDEMIC BEST PRACTICES

**Activate your plans.** The moment a public health emergency or pandemic is declared, property teams should activate their building's emergency response and business continuity plans. Assemble a team with representation from all function areas within the building and identify key decision makers.

### **Tenant Question: Does building management have a pandemic plan in place?**

*Our building has activated new procedures as part of our emergency preparedness plan to implement strategies to protect our tenants and workforce while ensuring continuity of operations. Our decisions are informed by the information provided by federal, state, or local government agencies, including the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO).*

**Stay informed.** Check with state and local health departments for outbreak notification requirements and encourage tenants to notify building management immediately if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19. To maintain the privacy of the individual, do not provide

### **Tenant Question: Will management notify tenants if any building occupants have tested positive for COVID-19?**

*"Building management is staying in close contact with local public health officials and monitoring the latest guidance from CDC. If it is suspected you have contracted the virus or if you have a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, please notify us immediately and quarantine yourself per CDC guidelines. We will notify you if an occupant or visitor to the building tests positive and take steps to implement any necessary enhanced cleaning procedures at that time."*

If you have a confirmed case in your building: *"On [date], an occupant on the [number] floor tested positive for COVID-19. This individual was last in the office on [date] and is now recovering at home. The tenant company has notified all employees who were identified as having been in close proximity to the confirmed individual and these employees are also in self-quarantine as a precautionary measure. The affected floor will undergo deep cleaning in the overnight hours to complement the enhanced disinfecting measures already in place in all building*

common areas. The health and safety of our tenants, visitors, employees and service providers is our top priority. [Company name] continues to follow all local, state and CDC guidelines and remains committed to transparent, timely communications. Please contact with any questions."

## CLEANING & SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

**Follow cleaning recommendations.** Follow CDC guidance and best practices for proper COVID-19 environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures, and encourage tenants and staff to follow routine hygiene and prevention recommendations.

**Tenant Question: What is the property team doing to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed in the common areas and restrooms on a regular basis?**

*"The building's janitorial staff is following CDC guidelines on proper cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces in public spaces and restrooms, as well as increased frequency of cleaning. As new guidance is provided by public health officials, we will modify our cleaning protocols accordingly. Hand sanitizer is also available to building tenants and visitors in no-touch dispensers throughout the common areas of the building."*

**Reach out to service providers.** Communicate with your suppliers and service providers about their pandemic plans and share your building's plan with them. Identify back-up vendors where possible in case of personnel shortages or supply chain interruptions. Review regular building operations and identify crucial service providers who provide essential services, such as waste management. Request that vendors do not send staff to your property who may be showing signs of illness or have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

**Tenant Question: How will the building ensure that its contractors and vendors who deliver supplies and work in the building are implementing appropriate disease control measures?**

*"While the building is open, building management will continue to provide critical services, such as security, janitorial, engineering and access control. We have asked vendor companies about their disease management measures, plans and ability to provide services in the event of a personnel shortage. We have ensured that adequate supplies are on-hand to support building operations, and back-up suppliers have been identified and contacted for the availability of supplemental inventory options as needed."*

## MAINTAINING BUILDING OPERATIONS

**Communicate regularly.** Establish regular, timely and factual communication with your tenants. Ensure that you have the most up-to-date email addresses and emergency phone numbers for your key building contacts. Consider using an emergency notification system for mass communication to tenants, employees and vendors. Create prescribed notifications that can be easily deployed and modified as the situation escalates. Train employees, tenants and vendors on your communication protocols and notification system.

**Tenant Question: Will the building tenants receive updates about building operations from property management?**

*"Building management has established a communications protocol with key contacts, including tenants, staff, vendors, and retailers. Throughout this pandemic, we are increasing the frequency of electronic communications via email, text messaging and social media and utilizing the building's emergency notification system as needed."*

**Monitor the situation.** Continue to closely monitor the outbreak and follow both CDC and local, state and federal government directives as they are delivered to determine if and when your building can return to its normal routine and operations. During the outbreak, expect increased employee absenteeism due to sickness, childcare and family care responsibilities and transportation shutdowns. Determine minimum staffing levels required to provide a safe environment for your staff and tenants. Identify and communicate essential staff to state and local governments. Most local jurisdictions have deemed commercial building staff “essential personnel” to ensure uninterrupted operations.

**Tenant Question: Will building operations be impacted?**

*“Our team is committed to keeping the building fully operational for our tenants at this time, as our staff has been deemed essential personnel by our jurisdiction. Building operations have been adjusted to ensure that they are consistent with the latest public health regulations. We continue to encourage tenants and building staff to stay home when sick. During this time, some routine building services may be impacted, including HVAC, cleaning, trash removal and concierge. All shared facilities, including conference rooms and exercise facilities, already have been closed to help reduce spread. Building management will continue to monitor guidance and alerts from public health agencies and local officials to assess when the building may return to normal operations.”*

## RESOURCES

### Centers for Disease Control

- **Coronavirus Home Page:**  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)
- **Coronavirus Print Resources:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- **Pandemic Resources:**  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources)

### World Health Organization

- **Coronavirus Home Page:**  
[www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
- **Pandemic Preparedness:**  
<https://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/en/>

### Pillsbury

- **Real Estate Operations in the Coronavirus Era:**  
<https://www.pillsburylaw.com/en/news-and-insights/real-estate-operations-in-the-coronavirus-era.html>

**For more information on BOMA International's COVID-19 resources, please visit:**

**[www.boma.org/coronavirus](http://www.boma.org/coronavirus)**