



CORENET GLOBAL

# VIRTUAL POP UP

A pop in community for **corporate real estate professionals**

## Pop-Up Webinar: Key Takeaways

28 April 2020

### **Are any of you in states where they are opening again? If so, are you sending people back to work? What about public transportation?**

- Many of our office clients are following medical statistics to guide their back to office date, not the 'open for business' date declared by the state or mayor.
- Harris County, Texas, is opening restaurants this weekend at no more than 25 percent occupancy. Hair salons will not open until May 15. Offices expect to go back gradually.
- Here in Atlanta, the public transportation system is still running, but on a very limited basis, and probably at a tremendous financial loss. There are not many people using it, and people are self-policing and keeping their distance. There are restrictions on how many people can be in a bus or rail car.
- Atlanta's transit system initially offered free fares. Several bus routes have closed due to lack of use. Passengers are directed to enter the rear of the bus only.
- We have a small office in Atlanta. We only have five people. We have given them the option to go into the office one day a week, by themselves, if they wish to. It gives people the chance to get out of the house and back into the rhythm. Of course, this is an office with five people, and it is a completely different ballgame for most people.
- We are not allowing employees to come into the office if they use public transit. If they rely on public transit, we are asking them to continue working from home.
- An article in yesterday's Wall Street Journal by T.J. Rodgers (founder and CEO of Cypress Semiconductor) shows that the correlation between speed of quarantine and infections is very low (.055), indicating other factors, such as density and use of subways, etc., are more important.

### **What about short-term lease renewals? How are landlords responding to such requests?**

- We are postponing all lease renewals if possible.
- We have not seen many requests coming in for short-term leases. We are not seeing the blend-and-extend.
- I spoke with a group of landlords yesterday. They are trying to hold firm on rental rates. Concessions are going up – both free rent and TI allowances – but rates are holding intact.

**What communications, if any, have landlords been sending to tenants?**

- I have received helpful communication from a landlord in Atlanta. The landlord had the forethought to say, 'please forward this to the policymakers in your company as well as to your staff.' I think we will hear more from landlords when governments allow things to open again.
- Landlords are now starting the conversation for re-entry. They are just now starting those communications.

**Is COVID-19 something that would normally be covered by insurance? Whose insurance – landlord, or tenant?**

- Basically, insurance today does not cover pandemics. It is expressly excluded. The big question is, will it be included going forward?

**Does an infected person have a duty to declare themselves when they enter a workplace?**

- This will vary from country to country in terms of what you can ask employees. In some cases, you cannot specifically ask them if they are sick. But you can ask questions such as 'have you traveled recently,' or 'have you been near somebody who is ill.' Beyond that, I am not sure there is much we can do. I believe you have the responsibility to let other employees know – without naming anyone – that an infected person was in the facility.
- You can go to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website, and they have provided [guidance](#) around this topic regarding what employers can say to their employees.

**Does anyone have a supply issue with procurement of sanitizer and wipes?**

- Yes. Our order has been on back order since early March.

**Are you providing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for your employees?**

- We are providing this for our employees and sourcing it for our clients.
- We are asking people to bring their own gloves or facial protection – just some sort of a buffer, not necessarily an N95 mask.

**What about limiting access to restrooms, break rooms and elevators?**

- I saw that Volkswagen taped off every other urinal in their big plants. But this could apply to sinks as well.
- Our production and manufacturing sites are still open, and we have blocked out every other sink and every other cubicle. At our smaller sites, where we might have only one or two cubicles and would not have large washrooms, we are putting signage on the washroom door to limit access to just one person at a time.
- In our break rooms, a lot of people use the fridge and the microwave. As an interim solution, we have put a lot of hand sanitizer there. Of course, that is not a perfect solution.
- We do not want people going offsite for food and snacks. So, we are allowing them continued access to break rooms and microwaves, with appropriate signage asking people to stay six feet apart. We are asking everyone to follow the "gym model," which is to wipe in, wipe out. In locations where we have floor ambassadors, they are available to coach people in the moment and remind them of the etiquette.

- We have put up signs: one person in the elevator at a time.
- Regarding elevators, we are allowing more than one person at a time. It is not practical in many of our locations to have just one person going up and down. But we are requiring people to wear mandatory face coverings while in the elevator, and they must use a tissue or shield to press the button if no staff person is there to do it. Face coverings are the best way to make elevators safe.
- I have measured my elevator pads, and fortunately I have a six-foot distance from corner to corner.

#### **What about gyms?**

- Our gyms will not be open for some time yet.
- It is the same for us. Our gyms will not be open for the foreseeable future. However, we are starting to offer some gym services. We are starting to do some Zoom calls and boot camps, that sort of thing.
- We have three gyms that are fully equipped. We just simply shut them down, and they will remain closed for the foreseeable future. We just do not have the level of staff required to keep them safe for employees. We did not offer any virtual classes or anything like that. We felt there was enough of that out there so people could access it on their own.

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