

PUBLICATION

Coronavirus: What Multi-Family Housing Complexes Need to Do Now

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March 13, 2020

If you own or operate a multi-family housing complex, addressing the rapidly spreading COVID-19 virus is crucial. Baker Donelson is staying up to date on the latest advice for the sector from the CDC and national housing groups and we have highlighted the following actions for our multi-family clients. Avoid "failure to prepare" liability by acting now!

- **Communicate.** Establish a communication protocol with residents, employees and vendors. Make sure you have multiple means of contacting people and that everyone knows who to notify if they are affected by the virus. At the executive level, create a response team of senior management in all departments to quickly address issues as they arise.
- **Stay informed.** Ensure that someone on your staff reads the latest updates from your local, state and federal agencies regarding transmission rates and any spread of the virus in your area. Consider daily communication with residents to provide trusted information from the CDC or WHO.
- **Keep it clean.** Implement more stringent cleaning procedures for all common areas using an EPA-registered disinfectant effective against SARS-CoV-2.
- **Consider closing common areas.** Fitness centers, pools, computer labs and other public areas should be thoroughly and frequently cleaned, with users provided with hand sanitizer and disinfectant before and after use if such areas are to remain open through this event.
- **Discourage gathering.** Cancel any scheduled events at your facility and ask residents to limit private parties. Request that residents restrict guests and visitors if possible. Although it sounds like a great idea to provide childcare for working parents or other community services, these are counterproductive to reducing the spread of the virus.
- **Work with employees.** Prepare for increased absenteeism and establish policies related to employee leave, telecommuting, staggered scheduling and abuse of leave procedures. Ensure that health care information is protected. Legal issues will arise from many of these issues, so check with counsel before changing your policies. See our [webinar](#) from March 11, 2020 where employment issues are covered starting at the presentation time 28:25 of the webinar and ending at 47:24.
- **Do not give health care advice.** Avoid liability issues by referring questions to the CDC or WHO.
- **Check on your vendors.** Suppliers are already notifying businesses of shortages in many cleaning supplies and household goods. Contact your regular vendors to determine if you will need to find additional sources for these items. Consider purchasing extra supplies if they are available. Services may be reduced due to shortages and employee leave issues.
- **Inform residents of rent policies.** Notify tenants that rent can be paid online without a fee, and determine how you will address rent delinquencies due to job closures or loss.
- **Notify authorities of any confirmed cases.** Ask residents and employees to notify a designated human resources staff member if they receive a positive virus test. The local and state health departments should be contacted immediately in this event.

If you have questions on planning for the impact of the coronavirus on your property, please contact [Amanda Wells](#) or any member of [Baker Donelson's Real Estate Team](#). Also, please visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What You Need to Know](#) information page on our website.

