

DOs and DON'Ts

COVID-Related Communications for Pawnshops

As we face spiking cases and new challenges, it's important to plan ahead for COVID-related contingencies.

Have a plan in place

Make sure that you have a plan in place that includes a chain of command, contact information for key players, and clear identification of roles in the event of a crisis.



Account access and passwords to social media channels should be accessible to appropriate staff with instructions for messaging. Be sure that any pre-scheduled messages are canceled or paused.

Make sure that you update your hours, if necessary, on your website, Google My Business, and Facebook pages.

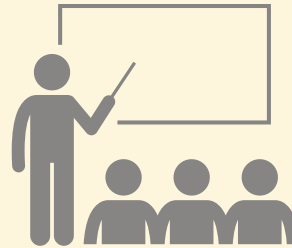
Refer to appropriate authorities



No one expects you to be an expert on public health, but they do expect you to follow the advice of those who are:

- [US Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)
- [State Health Department Websites](#)
- [Local Health Departments in US](#)
- [Local Health Departments in Canada](#)

Train your team



Make sure that all staff members know their roles.

Identify who is authorized to speak to media.

Everyone else should be taught this simple phrase:

"I am not authorized to speak on behalf of my employer."

Keep Messaging Succinct

Working in customer service as you do, you're accustomed to communicating with your audience frequently.



In crisis communications, however, it is more important to be accurate than quick.

Follow these guidelines:

- State only verifiable facts. Don't guess or make conjectures or predictions.
- Keep message focused
- Provide clear, actionable instructions and details as it pertains to your stakeholders (will your store be closed? how can they complete transactions? are their items okay?)
- Give Context: Include what is known, what is not known, and what is being done to fill in the gaps.



Copy–edit–paste: Sample text for various situations

In any crisis communications, it is necessary to issue a HOLD STATEMENT as soon as you are able. This is just a few brief sentences you put together in order to get ahead of the situation and prepare for the media or others who may first call seeking answers.

Once you've released a hold statement that informs your audience, you can remain quiet on social media until new information becomes available if you choose.

Here is some sample text that may help in various situations that arise as a result of the pandemic. Use them as a starting point from which you can craft your own messaging.



YOUR STORE IS ORDERED CLOSED DUE TO ORDINANCE:

"Our store, ABC Pawnshop, located at 123 Main Street is closed, effective January 10, 2021, in compliance with Governor Smith's Order.

Rest assured that we remain committed to serving our customers including strict adherence to social distancing guidelines and other health protocols. For information about your outstanding loans or other information, please visit our website www.abcpawn.com, email info@abcpawn.com, or call 410-123-5432.

YOUR STORE HOURS OR SERVICES CHANGE:

"The hours of our store, ABC Pawnshop, located at 123 Main Street have temporarily changed, effective January 10, 2021. Until further notice, we will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am until 3pm.

Rest assured that we remain committed to serving our customers including strict adherence to social distancing guidelines and other health protocols. For more information, please visit our website www.abcpawn.com, email info@abcpawn.com, or call 410-123-5432.

YOU CLOSE YOUR STORE DUE TO STAFF EXPOSURE/ILLNESS: NOTE—THIS MESSAGING IS ONLY NECESSARY IF YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY YOUR ATTORNEY OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

In which case we'd recommend a similar message as above.