



# SHARED BRANCH CLIENT FAQs: COVID-19/CORONAVIRUS

## Background

In light of the continued spread of COVID-19 (the Coronavirus), government agencies and businesses have begun taking steps to help protect their employees and ensure the continuity of their operations. CO-OP is doing the same.

We have received several client inquiries regarding CO-OP's strategy to ensure business continuity, specifically regarding our Shared Branching operations. Below are FAQs that provide information about our plans. Please note that as this situation remains fluid, so will our plans and our communications.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### **What plans is CO-OP making or has in progress to ensure business continuity in the event of the potential spread of COVID-19?**

We are prepared and will act according to our business continuity planning, including enacting our pandemic plan if needed. We are taking a "keep calm and carry on" stance as this is a rapidly evolving situation. We have a comprehensive Disaster Recovery and Pandemic Plan in place and have created a cross-functional team that is meeting daily to assess operational, technical, financial, service, staffing and planning.

We are confident in our ability to continue business and to provide the seamless and secure service our clients expect for themselves and their members.

We will continue to keep everyone informed if and when there are significant updates.

#### **What is CO-OP doing to safeguard its facilities for both employees and visitors?**

Extra janitorial staff have been called in to keep our offices clean. In addition, employees are being asked to take personal precautions and practice healthy habits to help prevent the spread of flu and other illnesses.

Our offices remain open to staff and visitors; however, we are encouraging anyone who exhibits a fever and is sick and contagious to please stay home.

As CO-OP has offices spread across the country, as well as a large percentage of remote-based staff, we are confident in our ability to keep business continuity should regional outbreaks occur.

#### **Is CO-OP restricting the travel of its employees?**

Of primary importance to us is the health and safety of our employees, and we are closely monitoring and following guidelines outlined by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and WHO (World Health Organization). With that in mind, our management team felt it



important to restrict non-critical business travel for our staff at this time. You might see and feel this as some meetings are being rescheduled to virtual or conference calls.

We do not expect these shifts to change our level of service, as our team's focus on your business remains our top priority. Additionally, our client service team is happy to work with you to conduct in-person meetings and/or create virtual meetings where appropriate.

### **What is CO-OP doing to ensure the Contact Center remains available to client credit unions and their members?**

Presently, our Contact Center and workforce management teams are actively monitoring call center activity to help determine our long and short range staffing plans. As the business partner to our clients, we will work closely with them to account for any upcoming known changes in their business. Many clients utilize our centers for overflow calls when their own center cannot handle the volumes. We are asking our clients to keep us informed in the event things change.

Additionally, we are currently implementing the technology to allow for enablement of Universal Agent, which among other things will allow us to load-balance call volume between our contact centers. We will be operationalizing this capability in the upcoming weeks and months and this will be an integral part of our business staffing plans going forward.

Also, should a client credit union be closed, we are asking them to please remind their members they have the power of CO-OP's 30,000 ATMs from coast to coast and, for CO-OP Shared Branch participants, a network of 5,710 shared branch locations to meet their banking needs.

### **SHARED BRANCHING**

#### **Is CO-OP Shared Branch Network planning any changes to the Operating Rules & Regulations (ORRs) in response to COVID-19?**

As you know the situation is very fluid and at this time we are not planning any rule changes. We are meeting with the Shared Branch Task Force on March 17 for input related to the situation. The Task Force represents the voice of the network participants and are key contributors to change ORR adjustments. Any recommended and approved changes from the Task Force will be communicated immediately.

#### **Can my credit union opt out of Shared Branching temporarily, if we were to find that we need to decrease the traffic flow at our branches due to Covid-19?**

A strength and benefit of the Shared Branch Network is to provide aid, assistance and continuity for fellow credit unions during times of crisis. We understand and continue to operate with the best interest of credit unions and members in mind. While your credit union may not opt out of Shared Branching temporarily, if you wish to restrict branch traffic and in-person visits, it should be done equally for all members, whether they are members of the acquiring credit union or guest members.



### **Can I suspend servicing guest members?**

At this time, the Operating Rule & Regulations (ORRs) do not permit a temporary suspension of guest member services and require equal service experiences across all members. CO-OP continues to closely monitor the situation and we will announce any changes to the Network ORRs should they be required to address the evolving situation. The ORRs ensure consistency of all network participants.

### **Can I restrict transactions?**

If your credit union wishes to restrict transactions, it should be done equally for all members, whether they are members of the acquiring credit union or guest members.

### **If I am closing branch and lobby operations, can I suspend guest member services in my drive-ups?**

Per the ORR's, servicing guest Shared Branch members is not required in your drive-up services.

### **How do I properly complete verification procedures if a member is wearing a medical safety mask?**

Similar to how the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) handles verifying identity, CO-OP recommends the same instructions. Tellers should be instructed to ask the guest member to temporarily remove the mask in order to meet the ORR requirement of matching the photo on the ID presented to the person requesting the transaction. If the guest member refuses to remove the mask, the teller should refer the member to their home credit union. All ID verification guidelines recommended in the ORR should be followed.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

### **Who can I contact with additional questions?**

Please reach out to Client Care at [clientcare@coop.org](mailto:clientcare@coop.org) and 1-800-782-9042, Option 3.

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