

# There Is No Corona Defense for Cartels

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In-house compliance teams should be on alert as the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread. It is often during times of perceived crises or disasters that competitors end up discussing subjects that can be risky from an antitrust perspective (e.g., procurement costs and selling prices). The risk is amplified when there is a corresponding downturn in the markets and financial uncertainty. Contacts with competitors can be dangerous even if the initial purpose of the contact seems legitimate under the circumstances, *i.e.*, to exchange information about coping with the current situation.

Given this, consider sending a compliance reminder or conducting a “refresh” training on the “do’s and don’ts” of competitor contacts. And, consider ramping up efforts to monitor potential cartel activities, at least during this period of heightened concern.

Finally, operations overseas are not immune from U.S. antitrust scrutiny. Consider the same tips from above, and the overall health of your compliance programs, even outside the United States.

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## Author

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