

# OVERVIEW

If pandemic influenza strikes, businesses must be prepared. Experts predict that:

- Absences could be between 10-60 percent, and that may include key personnel.
- A significant economic disruption could take place.
- The US Congressional Budget Office warns of a major recession, with an 80 percent drop in economic activity for the arts, dining and entertainment sectors; a 25 percent drop in retail activity; and a major slowdown in travel.
- Access to supplies and suppliers could be disrupted, as could transportation systems.
- Psychological depression in staff may occur.
- Panic may set in, leading to any number of unpredictable and unimaginable scenarios.

Business, no matter how big or small, must plan for the worst and address these issues. This brochure offers resources and ideas which can be used for pandemic planning.

# RESOURCES

## Web sites:

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.cidrap.umn.edu](http://www.cidrap.umn.edu)

[www.metrokc.gov](http://www.metrokc.gov)

[www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business)

[www.sia.com/business\\_continuity/](http://www.sia.com/business_continuity/)

<https://www.apfluwatch.com/>

## Other:

A number of brochures can be obtained in Rm. 5A at the Ross County Health District, or on our Web site, [www.rosscountyhealth.com](http://www.rosscountyhealth.com).

Also available in the personal and family preparedness series are:

### Booklet:

A Guide to Preparedness

### Pamphlet:

A Personal and Family Preparedness Plan

### Brochures:

Preparing for a Winter Storm

Preparing for a Fire

Preparing for a Flood

Preparing for a Thunder Storm, Lightning or Tornado

Preparing a First Aid and Supply Kit

Influenza and You

Bird Flu: What You Should Know

Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic

Preparing for Summer's Bugs and Insects

A Guide for Ross County's Business Community

This brochure is a publication of the Ross County Health District's **COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS** Program staff

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# Pandemic Planning: A Guide for Ross County's Business Community



*Courtesy of the*

Ross County

  
**Health  
DISTRICT**

# PLANNING

## FORM A TEAM

- ✓ Team will set company goals, provide input and guide planning.
- ✓ Begin by forecasting impact pandemic may have on your business, to include absences and workforce shortages, as well as supply and transportation issues. (Remember, those who are sick will miss work, but account also for those who will need to care for family members.)
- ✓ Review existing sick leave policy and determine if changes are needed for pandemic planning.
- ✓ Examine the possibility of cross training employees.
- ✓ Review/update chain of command.
- ✓ Identify staff who could perform duties and work from home.
- ✓ Decide whether in a worst-case scenario your facility will need security. Remember, people may be desperate.
- ✓ Decide whether your staff will use personal protective equipment (masks, gloves). If so, order ahead of time.
- ✓ Establish guidelines for allowing infected or recovering employees to return to work.

## PLAN

- ✓ Plan should address all findings of the team.
- ✓ Include methods for education on proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette, i.e., sneezing, coughing and nose-blowing.
- ✓ Should include a procedure for monitoring employee health.
- ✓ Identify methods for limiting the spread of influenza, i.e., avoid close contact, large gatherings, staff meetings, etc.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## INTERNAL

- ✓ Make educating all employees on the topic of pandemic influenza a priority.
- ✓ Obtain comprehensive contact information from employees and families immediately.
- ✓ Develop a plan that identifies a method or methods for getting information to employees quickly, i.e., e-mails, memos, announcements, etc.
- ✓ Develop a method for getting accurate information out to your employees and for keeping messages simple and precise. Maybe this task can be assigned to a three-person team, which is educated on pandemic influenza and tasked with tracking relevant information.
- ✓ Consider where and how information might be posted: i.e., an employee board, your Web site, etc.
- ✓ Direct employees to Web sites where they can access reliable pandemic information, such as *www.cdc.gov*.
- ✓ Ensure that your employees are able to communicate with management quickly and easily. Be prepared to answer their questions and address their concerns.
- ✓ If there's a Board of Directors, make sure the communication plan includes them.
- ✓ Make sure communications address any language/cultural barriers.

## EXTERNAL

- ✓ Identify other methods for communicating with suppliers, clients, transporters, etc.
- ✓ Identify a person or persons to handle media calls and inquiries.
- ✓ Identify a person or persons who will serve as a point of contact for local government.

# OTHER THOUGHTS

- ⇒ Plan now, since notice of a pandemic will be short. Even if it begins overseas it will likely arrive here within a few weeks.
- ⇒ The effects of a pandemic and a second wave could linger for months (4-12), so plan for the long-haul.
- ⇒ With an estimated 30-60 percent absence rate, staffing is easily the major issue for any business to address.
- ⇒ To limit the interaction of large crowds and to make it more likely that employees can get to work, consider allowing shift work. This will help employees who may have obligations to family, and it will also improve the likelihood that a business will remain productive.
- ⇒ It may be a wise idea to cross-train staff to perform multiple jobs, and to solidify the chain of command.
- ⇒ If it is possible for employees to work from home, that may limit influenza's spread.
- ⇒ Remember, even employees who don't contract influenza may take time off due to obligations to affected family members.
- ⇒ Recovery may be slow, since in some way most of your employees will be affected and may be mentally stressed.
- ⇒ If your business relies on travel - domestic or overseas, remember that this may be adversely affected.
- ⇒ A pandemic may lead to a recession.
- ⇒ Encourage your staff to get a seasonal influenza vaccine.
- ⇒ The influenza virus can live on surfaces for some time. Ensure your workplace is cleaned regularly and thoroughly.
- ⇒ Have a stock of hand sanitizer, tissues, etc. built up and ready for use.