



Pandemic Influenza Planning Guide for Businesses

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1.0 Introduction

Among the many natural and technological hazards that threaten modern society, pandemic influenza represents one of the greatest risks. No one knows for sure when we will see the next pandemic, but experts agree it could arrive in the near future. Planning for the prospect of pandemic influenza is one of the most effective steps businesses can take to mitigate the impacts of such an event.

Depending on the nature of the next pandemic influenza virus, the rate of spread and consequences could exceed anything we have encountered in the last century. The disease could spread easily, resulting in high rates of employee absenteeism. Viral infection and associated complications could lead to prolonged illness among a large portion of the population, and a significantly increased death rate. Traditional health services could be overwhelmed by the demand for urgent care. Illness and death will have an emotional impact on family, friends, and colleagues.

People may choose to avoid social contact, keep their children home from school, and avoid the workplace to prevent becoming ill. Tourism and other service-related industries in affected regions could experience a sharp and persistent decrease in demand. Impacts from such actions could ripple throughout our communities, affecting retail businesses, restaurants, development proposals, construction projects, and other elements of day-to-day community life.

Josephine County businesses can help protect their workers from the impacts of pandemic influenza, reduce risks to critical business functions, and minimize financial losses over the long term. They should plan for the possibility of losing employee skills and knowledge, at least temporarily. Organizations should also be prepared to deal with the loss of critical infrastructure, such as electrical power, transportation, and telecommunications.

Well-managed business response and recovery efforts, in partnership with stakeholders, can help reduce both infection and the consequences of a pandemic influenza.

Pandemic Influenza Defined

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily from person-to-person, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in very short time. History suggests that influenza pandemics have probably happened during at least the last four centuries.

Some pandemics are more damaging than others. Worldwide, the pandemics of 1957 and 1968 killed 4 million and 6 million people, respectively. But the pandemic of 1918, also known as the Spanish Flu, was even more devastating, killing between 20 and 50 million people.

While it is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur, or how severe it will be, health professionals are concerned that the continued spread of a highly pathogenic avian H5N1 virus across eastern Asia and other countries represents a significant threat to human health, as it may evolve into a strain that can be easily spread from person to person.

Why Businesses Should Act

Josephine County businesses play a significant role in safeguarding employee health and reducing financial losses associated with pandemic influenza. Businesses should consider the importance of efforts to:

Protect Employees – Employees will look to the organization for leadership and protection, including measures to minimize exposure to the virus. A pandemic influenza of the nature considered in this document will likely result in temporary workforce attrition. Each business will want to seek the optimum means to protect employees from exposure to the influenza virus.

Protect Essential Business Functions – Workforce reduction could put at risk the business operations needed for survival, such as acquiring raw materials, manufacturing, transporting finished products, delivering customer services, and invoicing. Interruption of such critical functions can cripple the effectiveness of a business unit or an entire organization. Extended loss of capability in any of a number of integrated functions could ultimately lead to business failure.

Minimize Net Financial Impacts – Business expenditures are likely to increase dramatically while each organization struggles with response and recovery activities. At the same time, income could drop substantially due to falling demand. Managing such financial impacts at a time of momentous uncertainty will be a challenge for any business.

Assist Communities – Beyond directly supporting employees and customers, organizations that provide critical infrastructure, such as electrical power, financial services, and telecommunications, have a special responsibility to plan for continued operation during a pandemic.

In short, Josephine County businesses should prepare for pandemic to ensure their survival, to enhance sustainability in emergency situations, and contribute to community protection

Purpose of this Guide

This guide summarizes the threat and the many key actions that organizations of Josephine County can and should take before, during, and after the arrival of pandemic influenza.

The audience for this work includes businesses of all sizes, types, and sectors active in Josephine County. Whether small business or a multi-national corporation, or some

enterprise in between, every organization will find ideas for practical application in this guide they can adapt to meet individual needs.

The intent of this document is to offer suggestions for consideration in managing pandemic risks, not to prescribe specific procedures. Businesses are encouraged to collaborate with Josephine County Public Health, Emergency Management experts, and other stakeholders in pandemic planning.

2.0 Understanding Pandemic Influenza

The bulk of this guide contains suggested actions for businesses to consider in managing the risks of pandemic influenza. However, it is important to understand some basic facts about the disease and the rationale behind the recommendations.

The Agent

There are three things to know about the influenza virus in contemplating actions to manage risks in the workplace:

Influenza Transmission – People could become exposed to the influenza virus in a number of ways, but the most typical methods involve contact with secretions from an infected individual.

A person could inhale virus-laden droplets or particles released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A contagious individual can easily infect others **within about 3 feet** through coughing and sneezing.

Someone could also pick up the virus on their hands from touching an infected person or a hard surface where the virus is present, and then introduce the virus by bringing their hands to their mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus makes its way to the respiratory tract where it goes to work.

Viruses can live on hard surfaces such as doorknobs for 24 to 48 hours, and on non-porous surfaces such as cloth, paper, and tissue from 8 to 12 hours. Once on the hand, the virus can survive for about 5 minutes.

Because of the way it is spread, hand washing and respiratory etiquette (covering your cough) are vital to preventing influenza transmission.

Impervious to Antibiotics – Viral-based influenza does not respond to antibiotics like bacterial-related diseases. The common medications used for bacteria infections, such as penicillin and streptomycin, have no effect on the influenza virus. Some recently developed antiviral medications can inhibit the dispersal of viral particles inside the body, but there is no medical cure for influenza. This suggests the most effective way to combat the disease is to avoid exposure to the virus.

High Mutation Rate – Influenza viruses have an ability to rapidly mutate. Viruses can and do change their characteristics readily from one generation to the next. The ability to adapt rapidly means the influenza virus can overcome obstacles to growth, including the body’s defenses, antiviral medications, and vaccines.

Infection Timeline

In order to take effective action to protect your workforce and business, it is important to understand the course of the disease.

Exposed – Once an individual is exposed to the virus, influenza particles make their way to the respiratory system, where they begin to replicate. A single virus can produce millions of copies of itself during the “incubation” stage. The incubation period usually ranges from one to three days.

Infectious – A person may be able to infect others within one day of acquiring the virus and is contagious for three to five days following the onset of symptoms. More importantly, **people can be contagious 24 hours before the appearance of any symptoms**. Businesses cannot rely on simply sending sick workers home to control the disease. By the time their illness becomes obvious to them and to others, many people may have been infected.

Symptoms – People respond to influenza in different ways, but the most common symptoms include fever, headache, cough, body aches, and weakness. Symptoms could rapidly increase in severity, and persist for a week or two. Some people who are sick with influenza, and therefore contagious to others, show few or no symptoms throughout their illness. However, a pandemic strain may cause more severe symptoms.

Complications – A major threat in past influenza pandemics has been the tendency for the viral infection to exhaust the body’s immune capacity. This opens the door for other diseases. Most notable among these complications is pneumonia, a bacterial infection that causes the build-up of fluid in the lungs and bronchial passages. Even if treated with appropriate medications, complications from a viral infection can result in prolonged illness or death.

Potential for Death – It is difficult to predict the likelihood of death among pandemic influenza victims. Much depends on the nature of the viral sub-type, how readily it resists the body’s many immune system defenses, and the physical condition of those infected. Historic outbreaks of influenza have shown, however, that death can come within hours of the first symptoms, or after a prolonged battle with complications over many weeks.

The implications of these points are important to highlight for businesses. First and foremost, organizations should identify ways to control exposure in the workplace. By reducing the chance that workers contract the disease, businesses will reduce the effects of a pandemic.

Second, as influenza enters the community, it will not be possible to assume that anyone – even those who lack symptoms – is free of the disease. This means that essential workers who are responsible for critical business functions, such as data management, may have to be separated from others.

Third, businesses should anticipate unprecedented disruptions in their workforce. Absenteeism may involve a significant number of employees at a given time, and workers may return to work one or two weeks after the onset of symptoms, or longer if complications ensue. There is always the potential for death among employees, and this brings special considerations for business continuity and emotional care among the surviving members of the workforce.

Interventions

Health professionals have learned much about influenza, including measures to help control the spread of the disease and prevent infection. Among the tools and techniques available, three are key:

Slow Initial Spread – With a vaccine unavailable for six months or more, it makes sense to impede the spread of the influenza virus, if possible. The most effective way is through **hand washing** and other personal hygiene practices, such as **covering your cough**. The influenza virus is inactivated by hand washing with regular soap and water.

Slowing the rate of illness spread also involves distance and time. The means of influenza transmission suggest that reducing the number of people in one place and limiting the amount of time people spend together will help control the spread of infection. The greater the distance between an infected person and a healthy one, the less chance the virus will be exchanged. Also, the less time they spend sharing the same space, the lower the probability of disease transmission.

Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm> for flu prevention educational resources.

Provide Immunization – The most powerful tool in the fight against influenza is a vaccine that stimulates the human immune system. A vaccine for the pandemic influenza strain will most likely differ from that given annually for the seasonal flu.

The vaccine for the pandemic strain can only be developed after the virus has been identified, and manufacture could require six months or more. Even after a suitable vaccine is ready, it will take time to distribute and must be administered before exposure to the disease to be effective. Two doses of vaccine may be required to build immunity, and these doses may need to be delivered one month apart.

Care for Those Affected – Some community members will become ill before a vaccine is available. To augment health care in traditional medical facilities, businesses may offer outreach services to their employees and families,

collaborating with Josephine County Public Health. Even an action as simple as checking on sick workers by telephone could result in life-saving interventions.

Secondary Consequences of Pandemic Influenza

Depending on the nature of the virus that presents the threat, secondary consequences of pandemic influenza of relevance to industry and commerce may include the following:

High Absenteeism – Workers will be exposed to the influenza virus like any other community member. Inevitably, some employees will become ill and fail to report to work. Some may be able to return to work after a short time, perhaps four days of illness. Most would take a week or two to recover, but some may develop complications and a few may die. Even employees who escape the illness could be absent while caring for ill family members or school age children. Some employees may refuse work they feel presents an unreasonable exposure to the chance of infection. Overall, your business may experience absentee rates exceeding any previous event.

Interruption of Essential Functions – Absenteeism could mean an interruption of essential business functions, defined as those activities that must take place in the short term to support business survival. These interruptions could quickly lead to untenable losses for the enterprise and require innovative trouble shooting to maintain critical operations.

Reduced Community Services – A pandemic will challenge many community elements we normally take for granted. Health care workers, fire personnel, police, and other responders may be incapacitated by the disease. Illness among workers in supply chains could result in shortages in essential goods. Security of some business facilities could become an issue. Transportation systems could be impaired by absenteeism.

Social Disruption – Fear could well dominate human behavior during a pandemic. Citizens will likely avoid some places of business if they perceive them to present a risk of infection. If required, orders to close schools will mean parents need to find alternative childcare or to stay home from work. Fear of infection may isolate many in a community.

Psychosocial Effects – A pandemic will have an emotional toll on the community. Survivors may suffer psychological trauma from dealing with illness or death among family members, interruption of critical community services, loss of employment, and financial disruption. Businesses will play a crucial role in focusing on the needs of workers during and following a pandemic, and providing stability in a time of crisis.

Economic Effects – Demand for your organization's goods or services may drop substantially. For example, fear of social contact could impact the service sector, including restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues, and other tourism industries. Reduced cash flow within the community will have ripple effects on surviving businesses.

It takes planning to effectively manage business risks from pandemic influenza. The remainder of this guide offers specific ideas on how businesses of all types and sizes can cope.

3.0 Principles in Pandemic Planning

Early and thoughtful planning by business leaders can reduce the impacts of pandemic influenza, protect essential business functions, and minimize financial losses for the enterprise over the long term.

Every organization will benefit from applying a number of key principles to the planning effort highlighted in this section.

Understand the Risk

Business managers should make decisions with a good comprehension of the **science** underlying an influenza pandemic and the risks involved. To be able to execute with confidence the actions needed to reduce the risks, business leaders must understand the factors contributing to the spread of the disease.

Businesses that have access to **reliable data** will secure an advantage. The following websites are reliable sources of pandemic information for international, national, state, and local information:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at www.pandemicflu.gov
- Oregon State Public Health at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/panflu.shtml>
- As the pandemic situation changes, Josephine County Public Health will issue press releases accordingly. If the need arises, a public information hotline can also be activated

It is also imperative that senior officers, administrators, and business unit managers have a clear perception of the likelihood and consequences of influenza throughout the pandemic period. Internal monitoring of illness (surveillance) will be important to track employee absenteeism and to help plan immediate business decisions.

Focus on Actions

While knowledge about risk is important, only **actions** can help manage the threat of a pandemic. Businesses are encouraged to take steps to help overcome the consequences of influenza, before, during, and after a pandemic episode.

As with other natural hazards, business planning for pandemic influenza will require thoughtful research on available options, informed decision-making, and documentation of key policies and procedures. An **implementation** schedule for selected actions would help ensure the business takes the essential steps in protection.

Raise Worker Awareness

Offering **awareness and education** sessions, brochures, and other materials in cooperation with local health authorities will help employees respond to the influenza threat with reason instead of fear. Well before a pandemic arrives in Josephine County, employees need to know how they can protect themselves at the workplace, at home, and elsewhere in their communities. They would benefit from knowing basic facts on how the influenza virus spreads and how to avoid acquiring the disease in the workplace.

Strict adherence to hand washing protocols, respiratory etiquette, and not working while ill is the cornerstone of an infection control plan and may be the most successful preventative action during a pandemic.

Informing and protecting the workforce will help avoid interruptions in essential functions, and may be the most important step any business can take in managing pandemic risk. Information materials on protecting employee health are at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm>.

Keep Your Business in Business

For hazards of all types, business leaders should identify the **essential functions** that are absolutely critical to enterprise survival. These are more likely to be time-sensitive functions that demand specific skills and knowledge. Many businesses have prepared Business Continuity Plans (BCP) that could serve well in a pandemic situation.

Managers should identify the **core resources** required in each function, such as skilled personnel, utilities, raw materials, equipment, or data, and contemplate the loss of these resources with several pandemic scenarios in mind. In the event of pandemic, core resources at risk first and foremost include the employees. Inasmuch as the influenza virus attacks people, skilled workers in essential organizational functions should be considered in plans to continue operations. In addition, every business should anticipate impairment among suppliers, utilities, and contracted services, including transportation and financial services.

The success of any business continuity plan depends on ready access to **alternate resources** in the face of adversity. During a pandemic, businesses that can temporarily replace ill workers will have an advantage. Businesses may want to consider succession planning, cross-training, and alternative ways that employees can work from home (e.g., telecommuting). Replacement workers could come from other business units, or from a pool of recently retired workers and contractors.

In addition to interruptions to the supply side of your business, it would be wise to anticipate impacts on **demand** for products or services. Depending on how the general public reacts to the threat of pandemic when it arrives, consumer confidence may be affected, with corresponding changes in consumption and social patterns. Businesses in the service sector, for example, may experience a drop in demand. Due to the unknowns surrounding pandemic events, businesses should be prepared to adjust operations to meet the demands of different situations.

Organizations that have prepared for and can quickly adapt to new situations will have a better chance of continuing operations and survival.

Collaborate with Others

Effective planning depends on consultation and collaboration with other community members and stakeholders. Plans prepared in isolation often fail. It is worth the effort to check assumptions and let others know your intentions and expectations.

Successful businesses recognize the potential benefits of cooperative pandemic planning with others, and will make deliberate efforts to involve key organizations at all levels. Connections to consider include:

- Employees, unions, occupational health and safety committee
- Customers, especially significant client organizations
- Suppliers and service providers
- Josephine County Public Health
- Chamber of Commerce and other partner businesses

4.0 Planning for Pandemic Influenza

With the foregoing principles in mind, the remainder of this guide offers actions that Josephine County businesses should consider in planning for a pandemic. The purpose of this section is to summarize in ten straightforward steps the core activities in the planning process.

Objective 1: Get Organized

Core Concepts

Pandemic Planning Team – The first step for any business in preparing for a pandemic is to establish an internal planning group. This may mean assigning responsibility for preparedness to a few managers in a small business, or to an existing committee in a large corporation. In all cases, it is advisable to assign responsibility for leading the planning process to one person, and ensure this “pandemic manager” has the authority to get things done.

The Planning Process – As with other business aspects, planning for pandemic relies on an understanding of the organizational objectives, solid research on the risks, creative alternatives to unique challenges, and a reliable decision process. The purpose of pandemic planning is to identify actions to undertake 1) before an outbreak, 2) during an outbreak of the disease, and 3) afterward to recover from the event. This requires information and evaluation. The planning process should also be documented so decisions are recorded in a “Pandemic Influenza Management Plan.” Refer to Objective 10.

Monitoring – When influenza appears in the community, your business will want to identify sources of reliable information on such items as the status of the disease where you have facilities and personnel. Monitoring includes tracking staff health to identify cases of influenza early so you may take steps to reduce the internal spread of the disease.

Consider These Actions

1. Appoint a "pandemic manager."

- Assign responsibility for pandemic planning to a senior manager with authority to lead a small internal group.

2. Assemble a pandemic planning team.

- Identify team members and provide terms of reference.
- Consider an existing committee, such as your current risk management or business continuity planning group.
- Include staff members who are familiar with labor, emergency management, and occupational health and safety issues.

3. Prepare to monitor the situation.

- Assign responsibility for monitoring to a small team of managers.
- Establish links with reliable sources of pandemic information, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at www.pandemicflu.gov, and Oregon State Public Health at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/panflu.shtml>.
- Prepare to monitor employee health in each business unit, such as taking daily temperature checks during a pandemic prior to entering the workplace.

4. Begin the pandemic plan.

- Develop a detailed outline of a plan, addressing the topics covered in the 10 objectives in this section.
- Assign responsibility for recording planning deliberations.

Objective 2: Assess the Risks

Core Concepts

Know the Risks – Effective action depends on a factual understanding of the probability and consequences of adverse events. In assessing the risks of pandemic influenza, your business should identify the people, facilities, and operations most likely to be affected, and gauge their vulnerability. Management and staff need to have a clear sense of the potential risks they face in the workplace. It is important for the Pandemic Planning Team to understand the nature of the disease, how it spreads, and potential effects.

Anticipate the Consequences – Some business facilities may be ordered closed by state or local government to assist in controlling the spread of infection. Closures could require the delivery of products or business services through alternate means.

Delivering Essential Services – Your business may play a role in maintaining essential public health or safety services in Josephine County, such as utilities, pharmaceuticals, food delivery, and health care. For example, health care services depend on energy, communications, and other services. Where a business provides products or services that support the health and safety of the community, it could have a legislative or regulatory responsibility to maintain these services (e.g., electrical power, telecommunications, or utility services).

Consider These Actions

1. Meet with Josephine County Public Health.

- Meet with Josephine County Public Health to learn more about influenza and safety measures specific to your business.
- Review available literature and web-based information on influenza.

2. Identify exposure points for employees.

- Identify internal and external contacts points where workers could be exposed.
- Involve worker groups in identifying risk exposures, considering such factors as distance, the number of people encountered, and the time of exposure.

3. Identify facilities that could be closed.

- Identify buildings that could be ordered closed. Identify the likely time period for the closure.
- For each facility that could be closed, prepare site-specific notification for closures of business facilities.

4. Identify business's role in essential community services.

- Identify the role your business could play in supporting essential public health and safety services.
- Work with Josephine County Public Health and the local government to assess the impacts of a possible interruption of your business on essential community services.

Objective 3: Protect Employee Health

Core Concepts

Workplace Safety – Taking reasonable precautions to safeguard workers from predictable workplace hazards is an obligation of every Josephine County business. Protecting the health of employees not only reduces potential organizational costs, it helps forestall critical workforce disruptions.

Infection Control Measures – This refers to specific actions in design, administration, or awareness that reduce the chance that employees will acquire influenza in the workplace. Some organizations may benefit from a written *Infection Control Measures Plan* for organizational facilities, and the assignment of implementation supervisors in all business units.

Social Distance – Knowing that respiratory diseases are spread by close proximity, businesses should address the requirement to increase social distance in the workplace. One method of social distancing to protect essential business services is to shield teams of essential service workers from potential exposure by separating them from other workers. Social distancing should also anticipate methods for separating workers from customers and suppliers who could be contagious. It may also be possible for some employees to work from their homes.

Consider These Actions

1. Develop infection control measures.

- Promote hand washing practices and provide hand wash stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Regularly clean common touch surfaces within the workplace (e.g. doorknobs, handrails).
- Remind staff of cough and sneeze etiquette and other hygiene measures.
- Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm> for infection control educational materials.

2. Increase social distance at the workplace.

- Implement measures to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, conference calls instead of meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees.
- Establish policies for a flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts).

3. Identify ways to separate staff from customers.

- Design workspaces to increase distance and reduce time of exposure.
- Install barriers to separate workers from potentially infected customers.
- Develop service delivery alternatives to limit employee contact with public, such as web-based services.

4. Prepare to separate essential staff.

- Identify essential staff to separate into one or two teams to avoid exposure.
- Plan support for workers, such as food, water, and information.

5. Offer annual immunization.

- Encourage and facilitate routine annual influenza vaccinations of staff.
- Advise at-risk employees to talk with their physicians about the pneumonia vaccine.

Objective 4: Prepare Employee Policies

Core Concepts

Coping with Illness – Situations may arise during a pandemic that challenge your organization’s regular employee policies. While workers are expected to understand and follow established rules of employment, there could be both a moral and practical rationale for exceptions. New or revised policies may be needed to address issues that could arise, including extended medical leave, leave to care for sick family members, or bereavement. Concern about lost wages is the largest deterrent to self-quarantine.

Replacement Workers – A special category of policies could address temporary workers needed to keep the business operating. Examine current provisions for hiring, paying, and offering benefits to temporary workers. Consider temporary employees for extended periods.

Business Support – Plans may be needed for employees who are dedicated to critical business operations, and to sustain workers throughout the pandemic period. Questions may arise among some workers on payment for overtime required to support the business. Special provisions may be in order for employees expected to separate themselves during the threat.

Consider These Actions

1. Develop employee leave policies.

- Develop policies for absences due to:
 - Personal or family member illness
 - Quarantine or school closure
 - Closure of your business facilities
 - Bereavement

2. Develop employment policies for use during a pandemic.

- Develop policies to maintain essential services through such means as:
 - Cancellation of vacations
 - Approval of overtime
 - Redeployment of staff
 - Use of part-time or retired staff
 - Contracting out
- Develop policies for temporary staff working longer than one year.

3. Prepare plans to support workers during a pandemic.

- Consider the following worker support services:
 - Identification for critical employees if your business supports critical community infrastructure.
 - Transportation for critical employees to and from the workplace, if required.
 - Child-care when schools are closed.
 - Mental health, stress counseling, and social services for staff and family members.
- Develop plans to separate essential staff, if necessary, at a work location or alternate site.

Objective 5: Plan for Business Continuity

Core Concepts

Supply vs. Demand – Businesses will differ in the consequences they experience during a pandemic. Some could lose business through a failure on the supply side, including workforce or supplier interruption. Effects on the demand side may affect others more. Preparing for business continuity requires a solid understanding of where threats could arise.

Priority Functions – The most important organizational functions to protect during a disease outbreak are those that must occur in the short-term to keep the business going. A six-week interruption of direct service delivery functions, for example, could have a great impact on an organization, whereas a similar disruption of the marketing function may have minimal effect. Response plans should address the coordination of business units, support services, suppliers, and contractors.

Existing Business Continuity Plans – Many businesses have developed Business Continuity Plans in anticipation of threats to information systems and facilities, such as those arising from earthquakes, floods, or structural fires. These plans should also account for workforce attrition and other consequences of pandemic influenza.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify critical business functions

- List functions that could lead to business failure if not performed in a specified time.
- Identify the skills required to perform essential services / functions.
- List personnel that are critical to business continuity.

2. Develop pandemic scenarios

- Anticipate supply situations that could reduce business capacity, e.g.:
 - High absenteeism
 - Facility closure
 - Travel restrictions
 - Interruption of supplies
- Develop pandemic scenarios that could decrease demand for products/services.
- Examine the potential surge in demand for your business's products or service areas.

3. Analyze potential business impacts

- Consider specific effects, such as:
 - Absenteeism, including temporary loss of highly specialized workers.
 - Increased expenditures associated with sick leave, death, and re-staffing.
 - Reduced income due to a drop in capacity and/or demand.
 - Reduction in any essential service/function.
 - Restrictions on business-related travel.

4. Prepare to adapt operations

- Identify the organization structure that will serve in coordinating response.
- Develop a plan to modify, reduce, or halt specific functions to cope with the impacts of a pandemic.
- Consider the conditions for suspending operations altogether.

Objective 6: Prepare for Supply and Service Interruption

Core Concepts

Understanding Needs – Community infrastructure has become so reliable these days that we take for granted the complex networks of utilities, telecommunications, transportation and other systems. Many businesses rely on “just-in-time” delivery of essential raw materials and supplies, even for resources that are critical to organizational survival.

Stockpiles – Businesses that can cope with delayed supplies in a pandemic will have a substantial advantage. Businesses should list the items needed to continue critical business functions if supply flows were interrupted for several weeks, including materials, supplies, and equipment, and identify where items could be stored.

Supplier and Service Duplication – “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket” is an obvious wisdom that applies in a pandemic situation. This means making an effort before a pandemic arrives to find alternate sources of the supplies and services your business depends on. Contact alternate suppliers to establish working relationships ahead of the need.

Contingency Funds – If your business could face a significant income disruption during and after an influenza event, your organization may require contingency funds for such ongoing expenditures as employee wages and equipment maintenance.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify sources.

- List the sources of critical raw materials, supplies, services, and information.
- Identify utilities and local government services required for business operations:
 - Water, waste disposal, sanitation
 - Electrical power, telecommunications
 - Fire and police services
- Determine contracted services that are critical to business continuity (e.g., courier, transport, and financial services).

2. Stockpile critical resources.

- Acquire and store essential raw materials for critical functions, where feasible.
- Store infection control supplies, such as soap, paper towels, alcohol-based, hand sanitizer, and cleaning supplies.

3. Arrange for alternate suppliers and service providers.

- Identify alternate suppliers for critical supplies, utilities, and services.
- Establish tentative agreements with alternates for easy activation, if needed.

4. Develop access to contingency funds.

- Develop a financial plan to continue payroll and to meet debt obligations in extreme situations.
- Set aside contingency funds or obtain access to sufficient credit for emergency application.
- Examine the organizational insurance coverage to determine if continuity of business/loss of income coverage applies in pandemic situations.

Objective 7: Prepare to Fill Vacancies

Core Concepts

Impacts of Workforce Attrition – For some businesses, workforce attrition could be the single most significant impact of a pandemic. The loss of many workers at one time could affect mission-critical operations. For other enterprises, the loss of a few specialists (such as IT technicians) could directly impact critical business functions, such as service delivery and billing. Plans for duplicating staff capabilities would help overcome the effects of absences.

Hierarchy of Resources – To protect the current workforce, consider re-allocating existing staff first, then perhaps using recently retired personnel and other past employees. If other workers are still needed, consider sources from staffing agencies or professional contractors for short-term allocation. As a last resort, replacement workers may be hired to fill key positions.

Training – Simply placing people at a workstation may not be enough in some businesses. Many functions today are complex and require at least some orientation for a new person to be moderately effective. Training may be essential. It would be wise to gather training materials ahead of time, with the cooperation of current workers, such as job descriptions, procedure manuals, and cheat-sheets of special information, such as passwords.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify critical employee capabilities.

- Identify the number of staff by classification required to maintain critical business services, e.g., machinists, customer service agents, or accountants.
- Identify special qualifications needed to perform critical services/functions, e.g., license to operate heavy machinery.

2. Arrange for alternate workers.

- Plan to redistribute internal human resources temporarily, as appropriate.
- Identify retired staff that could be re-activated to work in critical areas.
- Identify the positions that could be covered by temporary contract workers and ensure contracts with staffing agencies are up to date.

3. Plan to support replacement personnel.

- Develop training requirements for critical positions, and train staff in multiple skills to allow them to transfer into work areas.
- Develop just-in-time training materials to help workers learn positions new to them.
- Train ancillary workers, e.g., employees in other positions, retirees, and contractors.
- Manage security codes, access and passwords to reduce frustration for re-deployed or replacement personnel.
- Identify services that could be contracted out and prepare plans, including contracts.
- Develop a hiring plan to replace lost or incapacitated employees.
- Resolve with employee unions any issues related to temporarily filling positions vacated by prolonged illness or death among staff.

Objective 8: Inform Employees

Core Concepts

Knowledge is the Cornerstone of Protection – People are empowered when they understand risks and how to manage them. In preparing for pandemic influenza, informing employees of the threat and planned infection control measures helps workers understand how they can protect themselves. Clear messages and frequent communication are essential.

Consider the Audience – Risk communication methods should account for the workplace opportunities for communication. Newsletters could deliver common safety messages to all employees, whereas posters may be more appropriate for specific business units. Message content should match interests and cover general information on influenza (e.g., signs and symptoms) and business-specific issues (infection control measures, organizational policies).

Develop Messages – Develop messages for employees on pandemic influenza, the importance of hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and staying home when they are ill. Obtain brochures and sample health information at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm>. **Introduce and reinforce these messages during the regular flu season to help employees establish good hygiene habits and prevent lost time due to illness.**

Consider These Actions

1. Develop communication methods.

- Develop means to communicate with employees about pandemic.
- Develop materials for employee awareness, such as workplace signs and pamphlets.
- Develop a series of information sessions to educate staff about pandemic.

2. Share risk information.

- Inform staff on the nature and consequences of pandemic influenza.
- Inform employees in high-risk positions of their exposure.
- Educate staff on the importance of staying away from the workplace if they or members of their household become ill.

3. Advise staff of infection control measures and policies.

- Emphasize the importance of good hygiene and hand washing.
- Explain infection control measures, immunization, and health policies.
- Explain the rationale for building closures, isolation, quarantine, and travel restrictions.

4. Plan to keep staff informed during pandemic.

- Keep up-to-date a contact list for all employees, including next of kin.
- Respond to rumors with facts.
- Develop an employee information call service, e.g., phone lines dedicated to keeping workers informed.

Objective 9: Inform Other Stakeholders

Core Concepts

Maintaining Confidence – Considering the integrated nature of most business enterprises these days, the importance of sharing timely information with your partners and stakeholders cannot be overstated. At a time of uncertainty, anyone dealing with your company will appreciate accurate messages on the status of your operations. Communicating the infection control measures and backup plans to deal with illness and its effects will help maintain confidence in your business and its management. It is especially important to share information on the operational status of your business if you offer essential community services, such as pharmaceuticals, food, gasoline, and other commerce deemed necessary.

Frequent Communication – Because the pandemic situation could change daily for any organization, it would be beneficial to communicate with stakeholders frequently. For example, it is important to inform local suppliers, customers, and business partners of any plans for temporarily reducing or halting services. A website may be the most cost-effective way of informing large numbers of stakeholders about your operational status.

Information Strategy – To maximize collaboration among partners, suppliers, and customers, each business should consider the information to be shared with others, and develop a formal information strategy for use during a pandemic. Such a strategy should address the information needs of external stakeholders and communicate the status of operations, including any shutdowns, timelines for re-start, and alternative means of production and service delivery.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify key stakeholders.

- Create an information contact list of external suppliers, key customers, client and partner agencies, and keep the list up to date.
- Develop an email and fax distribution list.

2. Confirm assumptions.

- Confer with primary customers and suppliers to determine their information requirements about your organization during a pandemic.
- Monitor the news media for information released about your organization.

3. Advise stakeholders of your preparedness plans.

- Develop technologies for keeping stakeholders informed on the status of your business, such as the use of a call center, email distribution list, or website.
- Inform external stakeholders of your preparations for pandemic and potential limitations.
- Jointly distribute publications and other written material.

4. Plan to keep stakeholders informed during pandemic.

- Provide organizational status information via news media, call centers, and website.

Objective 10: Prepare a Pandemic Influenza Management Plan

Core Concepts

Record of Decisions – As noted in Objective 1, a Pandemic Planning Team will want to document the effort devoted to each of the previous steps. A *Pandemic Influenza Management Plan* records the policies and procedures developed to serve the organization in preparing for and responding to a pandemic. The Plan need not be long, but it should address key items that will guide decisions during a pandemic. Such a document may form part of an existing plan, such as a *Business Continuity Plan*, *Risk Management Plan*, or *Emergency Management Plan*.

Communicate Policies with Others – A written plan communicates your organization’s assumptions and essential decisions to customers, suppliers, and other stakeholder groups. This helps to integrate preparedness plans and promotes collaboration.

Implementation – The Pandemic Planning Team will inevitably identify suitable actions for protecting the organization, and may wish to set out an implementation schedule in the Plan. Actions should address any changes to the physical work environment, employee training requirements, and opportunities to exercise the Plan.

Consider These Actions

1. Prepare a Pandemic Plan.

- Prepare a detailed outline of the *Pandemic Influenza Management Plan*. Consider the attached format example.
- Record results of planning decisions and collected information in a draft Plan.
- Assemble and edit the draft Plan, and prepare copies for consultation with others.

2. Consult with others about the Plan.

- Facilitate an internal review of the Plan by senior managers, business unit leaders, and worker representatives.
- Request an external review by key customers, partners, suppliers, and Josephine County Public Health.
- Consider comments and revise the Pandemic Plan accordingly.

3. Exercise the Plan to further improve.

- Develop a few scenarios to represent the range of situations that could arise for your organization during a pandemic.
- Lead a discussion of the Pandemic Plan response elements to test the feasibility of key tenets, involving senior executive and business unit managers.
- Conduct an exercise of the Plan with critical business units, using a range of pandemic scenarios.

5.0 Pandemic Influenza Management Plan Format Example

One way to organize a Pandemic Influenza Management Plan is by the 10 objectives outlined in the main document of this guide. The following offers a sample outline for such a Plan.

Pandemic Influenza Management Plan

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose of the Plan
- 1.2 Scope of the Plan
- 1.3 Responsibility for Keeping the Plan Up-to-Date
 - Name and Title

2.0 Response Organization

- 2.1 Pandemic Manager
 - Name and Title
 - Roles and Responsibilities
- 2.2 Pandemic Planning Team
 - Members
 - Roles and Responsibilities
- 2.3 Monitoring Plan
 - Internal
 - External

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Exposure Points for Employees
 - Customer Service Counters, Rooms
- 3.2 Facilities that May be Closed
 - Entertainment Facilities
- 3.3 Organization's Role in Essential Community Services

4.0 Employee Health Protection

- 4.1 Infection Control Measures Plan
 - Name and Title of Infection Control Leader
- 4.2 Measures to Increase Social Distance at the Workplace
 - Telecommuting Policies, Equipment
- 4.3 Measures to Separate Staff from Customers
 - Web-based ordering, Telephone Services
- 4.4 Plan to Separate Essential Staff
 - Who, Where, When, How will they be supported
- 4.5 Annual Immunization Program

5.0 Business Continuity During A Pandemic

- 5.1 Critical Business Functions
 - Functions that Must Occur Every 48 hours
 - Functions that Must Occur Weekly

- Functions that Must Occur Monthly
- 5.2 Pandemic Scenarios
 - Minor, Moderate, Severe
- 5.3 Potential Business Impacts
 - Interruption of Supply
 - Drop in Demand
- 5.4 Response Organization During A Pandemic
 - Emergency Operations Center Location and Personnel
- 5.5 Options for Adapting Operations
 - Policies for Suspending Some Operations
- 6.0 Supply and Service Interruptions
 - 6.1 Supply and Service Sources
 - 6.2 Alternate Suppliers and Service Providers
 - 6.3 Stockpiles of Critical Resources
 - 6.4 Contingency Funds
- 7.0 Employee Vacancies
 - 7.1 Core Policy on Vacancies
 - 7.2 Critical Employee Capabilities
 - 7.3 Alternate Workers
 - List of Potential Alternate Workers by Business Unit
 - 7.4 Supporting Replacement Personnel
- 8.0 Employee Policies
 - 8.1 Employee Leave Policies
 - 8.2 Employment Policies for Use During A Pandemic
 - 8.3 Policies to Support Workers During A Pandemic
- 9.0 Employee Information
 - 9.1 Communication Methods
 - 9.2 Communicating Risk Information
 - 9.3 Content of Messages
 - 9.4 Keeping Staff Informed During Pandemic
- 10. Informing Other Stakeholders
 - 10.1 Key Stakeholders
 - 10.2 Communication Methods
 - 10.3 Content of Messages
 - 10.4 Keeping Stakeholders Informed During Pandemic

6.0 Resources

Note: Reference to any private industry or professional association does not constitute an endorsement. The sites below were compiled in the spirit of information sharing. This document is intended neither as a comprehensive resource nor an official recommendation.

Government Sites

State of Oregon

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/panflu.shtml>

U.S. Health and Human Services

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

HHS Pandemic Influenza Specific Business Continuity Checklist

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab4.html>

HHS Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise Materials

<http://www.hhs.gov/nvpo/pandemics/tabletopex.html>

Infection control and education materials from Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm>

Comprehensive Pandemic Preparedness PowerPoint Presentations from CDC and HHS sources are posted on the Arizona Department of Health's Web site

<http://www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu>

British Columbia Ministry of Health

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pandemic/>

General Business Continuity Planning

Guide from Institute for Business and Home Safety

<http://www.ibhs.org/publications/view.asp?cat=84&id=556>

Sample Plan from Ready.gov

http://www.ready.gov/business/_downloads/sampleplan.pdf

FEMA Emergency Management for Businesses

General Guidelines for Business Continuity Planning by FEMA

<http://www.ready.gov/business/plan/index.html>

Emergency Management Guide for Business & Industry (FEMA's Web site is also an excellent resource for family disaster preparedness guides - recommended distribution to employees)

<http://www.fema.gov/business/guide/index.shtm>

Private Sector Sites

Avian Flu: Preparing for a Pandemic (32 page PDF)

A report for employees and clients of Marsh on risk related topics.

http://www.marsh-asia.com/birca/white_paper.pdf

Example of a Pandemic Influenza Workplace Plan (12 page PDF)

Based on Shell Oil's workplace plans for operations in Oceana. The host Web site of this posting has numerous flu related planning resources.

http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC_____14597.aspx

Pandemic Flu Planning Guide for Infrastructure Providers (59 page Word Doc.)

The actual guidelines begin on page 14. Table 3 is of particular interest.

Suggested summary actions for infrastructure providers for each Alert Code (New Zealand has adopted a PI alert code which seems practical and understandable for the public). Another good tool is the employee-screening algorithm on page 36.

<http://healthcareproviders.org.nz/publication/documents/v9PandemicPlanningGuide.DOC>

Planning Checklist in brochure form by the Trust for America's Health (2 Page PDF)

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/flu/FluBrochure.pdf>

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Guide to Business Continuity Planning for Disaster Scenarios (for purchase)

http://www.nfpa.org/catalog/product.asp?pid=160004&src=nfpa&order_src=A292

Contingency Planning Exchange, Inc (CPE) Web site

CPE posts influenza related topics on its Web site. Archive available to members.

<http://www.cpeworld.org>

Continuity Central (CC) Web site

CC posts influenza related topics on its Web site, including WHO updates for business community and best practice recommendations.

<http://www.continuitycentral.com/asiapac2004.htm>

Occupational Health Disaster Emergency Network's (OHDEN) Web site

Site is specific to pandemic influenza private industry workplace planning. This site has links to all state response plans.

<http://ohden.sph.unc.edu/pandemic/index.htm>

Much of this list is courtesy of Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, Austin, TX