

Pandemic Influenza Planning for Your Business

Pandemic planning is crucial. Should a pandemic occur, you will play a large role in the health and safety of your employees as well as limiting any negative impact to your company and to the general population. To help plan for such an event, Preparis has provided this checklist for your business. It focuses on activities and roles that businesses can do to prepare and/or prevent damage from a potential pandemic. For further information, please contact the Preparis X-Force at xforce@preparis.com

1. Prepare your business for the impacts of a pandemic

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Ensure Leadership understands their roles and responsibilities as it relates to a pandemic.
		Ensure all employees have the proper resources (information, tools, emergency numbers and contacts, vendors etc.) required to maintain business operations by each location during a pandemic.
		Make certain each employee knows how to respond during a pandemic.
		Develop a plan for situations that might occur during a pandemic, such as loss of workforce, resources and output of work.
		Determine the possible financial impact a pandemic could have on your business.
		Stay tuned to local TV and other resources for the latest news, information and announcements regarding an outbreak of a pandemic. This includes public health officials, emergency management and others.
		Establish an emergency communications plan. This includes key contacts, chain of communication, and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
		Practice drills to test your plans. Revise periodically or as needed.

2. Prepare your employees and customers for the impact of a pandemic

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Be aware of and plan for potential employee absences due to factors such as illness, family illness, community containment, school/business closures, or public transportation closures.
		Create guidelines that allow for modified communication in lieu of face-to-face contact (i.e. hand shaking, meetings, office layout, and shared workspaces) amongst employees and between customers.
		Encourage and track employee's annual flu shots.
		Ensure access and availability to healthcare for each employee during a pandemic and improve these services if needed.
		Evaluate and ensure each employee has access to mental healthcare services during a pandemic. Services include corporate, community, and faith based resources.
		Stay tuned to local TV and other resources for the latest news, information and announcements regarding an outbreak of a pandemic. This includes public health officials, emergency management and others.
		Identify employees and customers with special needs and ensure they are incorporated into all pandemic and preparedness planning.

3. Create and execute rules and guidelines during a pandemic

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Create policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences due to the pandemic. This should include establishing guidelines as to when an infected person who is no longer sick can return to work.
		Create policies that allow for flexible working conditions such as telecommuting and flexible work hours.
		Establish rules for preventing the spread of the illness at work including encouraging hand washing, providing hand gel and disinfecting supplies, cough etiquette and the exclusion of those with flu symptoms.
		Establish guidelines for travel to affected areas (either prohibiting or limiting travel), evacuating employees from affected areas when an outbreak begins, and when employees can return to work post-outbreak.
		Ensure Crisis Teams follow response procedures during a pandemic and ensure all employees understand these procedures and ensure business knowledge is transferred to key employees.

4. Ensure you have resources available to protect your employees and customers

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Provide hygiene and disinfectant items for all employees and ensure they are placed in a central location. Items include anti-microbial hand gel, tissues, trash cans, and disinfecting wipes.
		Ensure all communication technology and infrastructure is secure and reliable during a period of what might be stressed or over-worked communication lines. These include email, phones, fax and other resources.
		Provide medical resources, information, and advice as needed during an emergency situation.

5. Communicate with and provide information and education for your employees

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Ensure employees have information regarding pandemics including signs/symptoms, modes of transmission, and duration as well as personal and family response plans during an outbreak.
		Expect fear and anxiety amongst employees and help spread accurate information to ease these fears.
		Ensure all language and communications are appropriate and understood by all employees.
		Ensure all employees know and understand your preparation and response plan for pandemics.
		Provide information to employees about home-care for themselves and family members.
		Create venues (emergency numbers, websites, or email) for communicating the status of the pandemic as well as actions to employees, vendors and customers on a consistent and timely manner.
		Identify resources such as the Internet, local radio or TV, local public health officials and others for up-to-date information regarding the current pandemic situation and for obtaining treatment such as medication.

6. Coordinate with outside sources and assist your community

Initiated	Fulfilled	
		Work with insurers, health insurance, and local health care facilities to share and receive pandemic information.
		Work with federal, state, and local public health officials and emergency responders to help planning, share your plans and understand the resources these agencies offer.
		Offer any assets or services your business could contribute to local or state public health officials.
		Share best-practices with other businesses and groups in your area to improve response to a pandemic outbreak.