



A Guide to Supplementing Your Business Continuity Plan for Pandemic Influenza

**County of San Diego
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What is Pandemic Flu?

A pandemic is an outbreak of influenza or “flu” that occurs worldwide and affects many people. Pandemic flu is a new flu virus that causes serious disease in humans. There is no Pandemic flu anywhere in the world today. **Avian or “bird” flu is not pandemic flu.**

Avian flu is almost always in birds and does not spread easily among the small numbers of people who have gotten sick with it.

A pandemic means:

- It’s a new flu virus in humans.
- People have no immunity to it.
- It causes serious illness.
- It spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

How would a pandemic effect businesses?

- Pandemic flu would come in 2-3 “waves” of 6-8 weeks each over 18 months. Up to 30% of your employees may be ill or caring for others during this time.

What should businesses do now to be prepared?

- Identify your essential services and which can be done by employees telecommuting.
- Plan for back-up for your “essential” workers and how to get supplies.
- Prepare for protection of your workers from disease spread at the worksite.

The following steps describe how to carry out these preparations*

1. Identification of essential services and prioritization

Identify the services or functions that are the minimum you need to perform to keep your business running. Prioritize the essential functions from most important to least important.

2. Assessment of Telecommuting Capabilities

Consider:

- Whether the essential services could be performed by employees telecommuting.
- The number of employees needed and the number who are equipped to telecommute (e.g., have home access to internal business servers and have computer, cell phone, BlackBerry, etc.)
- The number who could telecommute if you made the necessary upgrades to your system and purchased the necessary equipment.

3. Training Needs to Accommodate Reduction in Staffing Levels

* Attached are Pandemic Flu Worksheet Tables, related to the steps outlined above.

Assume that staff decreases by 30 % for 6-8 weeks several times over an 18-month period. Identify what you must do now to train adequate staff to perform the essential functions.

4. Reliance on External Suppliers

Evaluate each essential service and determine if it is dependent on supplies (or support) from external businesses. Identify the main supplier and make them aware of their role. Also identify an alternate supplier (but who is not necessarily contacted).

5 Employee protection from Pandemic Influenza Infection at Work

Review the next section and determine which of the suggestions are most appropriate for your business. Some of the measures will require changes in the physical layout of the workplace or employee training or purchasing supplies. Develop a plan and become prepared for putting these measures in place during a pandemic.

Suggested Steps for Pandemic Influenza Planning

At the back of this document are Pandemic Flu Worksheet Tables, related to the steps outlined below. You can access these electronically at modern-day.com/PanFlu/business.

What can you do during a Pandemic to reduce spread of Pandemic Flu in your workplace?

1. Change the work habits of your employees.
2. Keep employees as far away from each other as possible.
3. Disinfect work stations and common surfaces (areas all employees use).
4. Check air ventilation.
5. Encourage your employees to not come to work if they or someone in their household is sick with flu.

How?

1. **Change the work habits of your employees.**



Give your employees these instructions to limit the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands often and/or use a hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Then wash your hands.
- Avoid sharing your pens or other personal items.
- Limit shaking hands with others.
- Reduce your contact with common surfaces. If this can't be avoided, use a paper towel or gloves and then follow-up with the use of a hand sanitizer.
- Sanitize work areas at least daily.

2. Keep your employees as far away from each other and the public as possible.



- Do as much of your business as possible by telephone, computers or electronic communications
- Install safety glass or plastic barriers between your workers and customers.



- Consider remote work such as telecommuting or having your employees work in alternative (more isolated) work areas.
- Redesign your work stations to create as much distance between your employees as possible (3-10 feet apart)

3. Disinfect work stations and common surfaces.

- Disinfect or sanitize all surfaces that are touched often with diluted bleach (10%, while wearing latex or vinyl) gloves. You should consider installing automatic doors and motion-controlled light switches to eliminate the need to touch such items.
- Avoid having your employees share work stations.
- Use disposable covers on items difficult to disinfect. Examples of these items include computer keyboards and mice and phones. Give each of your employees their own equipment if possible.
- Install motion-activated soap, towels, and water in the restrooms and break rooms.

4. Check air ventilation.

Some suggested steps to consider for your worksite during a pandemic include :

- Adjust the ventilation system to make air fresher. Fresh air is not likely to contain disease-causing agents.
- Install an ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system. Some experts think UV disinfection of re-circulated air reduces disease-causing agents.
- Install filters for the re-circulated air. Some experts believe that installing a filter (MERV 13) reduces disease-causing agents.

5. Stay home when ill.

Encourage your employees not come to work if they or someone in their household is sick with flu-like illness. You should provide employees with information about:

- Flu symptoms (These are high fever, muscle aches, sore throat, and cough).
- How the flu is spread.



- **By Contact:**

When your hands touch contaminated hands or surfaces

and then you touch your mouth or eyes.

- **By Saliva or Nasal Discharge:**

When an infected person coughs or sneezes, droplets can land on your mouth, eyes, or common surfaces or you may breathe them in.

What should you do today as a responsible employer?

- Develop your plan for business continuity during a pandemic
- Consider purchasing large amounts of:
 - Waterless hand sanitizers for employee work stations and other areas. Make sure the hand sanitizer contains **at least 60%** alcohol.
 - Disinfectant/sanitizing wipes
 - Household bleach and spray bottles
 - Tissues
 - Disposable latex or vinyl gloves
- Check your air ventilation system. Make any needed changes.
- Install glass or plastic dividers where necessary.
- Provide training for your employees about common sense steps to limit the spread of germs, such as handwashing.
- Review your sick leave policies and update them as needed.



