

Influenza

Preparing Your Business for a Flu Pandemic



In a pandemic flu, Michigan businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact on the economy and society.

All companies – but especially those providing power and communications – have a responsibility to prepare to continue operations in a crisis.

Planning for a flu pandemic can also help prepare businesses for other emergencies, such as a natural disaster or a terrorist attack.

In a pandemic, it is very easy for the virus to spread rapidly to large numbers of people. Businesses may have to implement telecommuting options to reduce the number of employees in the work place, and require employees who may be ill or who are ill to stay home. A quarter or more of the working population may have to take days off because they are sick or they have to care for a child or family member who is sick.

A sudden and prolonged workforce reduction may require some businesses to prioritize their essential business functions and temporarily suspend others. Some business services may be in greater demand and more important for economic stability and community well-being, such as grocery stores, banking services and medical supply delivery.

Each pandemic is different. The impact on business will not be fully understood until more is known about how a pandemic is evolving. But, there are things businesses can do now to be prepared.

Business Checklist

- **Designate a pandemic coordinator or team** with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning.
- **Identify the essential employees, materials, suppliers, subcontractors and logistics** that will be required to maintain business operations during a pandemic.
- **Establish and regularly update an emergency communications plan.** This plan should include key contacts (with back-ups), a chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
- **Prepare and allow for employee absences during a pandemic** due to personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school closures, and public transportation closures. Establish policies for compensation and sick leave unique to a pandemic (non-punitive, liberal leave), including policies for when a previously ill person may safely return to work.
- **Establish policies for flexible worksites (telecommuting) and flexible work hours (staggered shifts).** Develop methods (hotlines, dedicated websites) for timely communication of pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers.

- **Plan for scenarios that greatly increase or decrease demand for your services**, such as restrictions on public gatherings or the need for hygiene supplies.
- **Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on your business** using multiple scenarios that affect different product lines or production sites.
- **Evaluate employee access to and availability of health care services** during a pandemic, and improve services as needed.
- **Share pandemic plans with insurers and local health care facilities**, and become familiar with their plans. Participate in the planning process of federal, state, and local public health agencies, and share your pandemic plans with them.
- **Communicate with local and state public health agencies and emergency responders** about the assets and services your business could contribute to the community during a pandemic.
- **Encourage hygiene practices that can slow or stop the spread of germs and viruses.**



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION www.osha.gov