

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING GUIDE

Among the many natural and technological hazards that threaten modern society, pandemic influenza represents one of the greatest risks. Early and thoughtful planning can reduce the impacts of pandemic influenza, protect our essential business functions, and minimise financial losses for our business over the long term.

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ABOUT US

Alphonsa Cashew Industries is one of the largest procurer, importer, processor and exporter of cashew and cashew-based products.

We have ownerships or active engagements in all stages of the cashew value chain starting from procurement of the highest quality raw cashew nut at the farm-gate level from 6 origins to in-house processing in 13 processing facilities in India and distribution of superior quality cashew kernels to over 43 countries worldwide. Cochin Chamber of Commerce, one of the most reputed Chamber of Commerce in India, ranks us among the top 10 shippers of cashew from India. We are uniquely positioned to provide the finest quality fully traceable cashew kernels that have been procured sustainably and processed responsibly to our diverse customers worldwide.

INTRODUCTION TO PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

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.

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.

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.

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.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC

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 defences, antiviral medications, and vaccines.

Infection Timeline

In order to take effective action to protect our 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. We cannot rely on simply sending sick workers home to control the disease. By the time their illness becomes obvious to us 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 defences, 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 our businesses. First and foremost, we should identify ways to control exposure in the production facilities and other workplace. By reducing the chance that workers contract the disease, we will be able to 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 from our workforce who are responsible for critical business functions, may have to be separated from others.

Third, we should anticipate unprecedented disruptions in our 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.

Provide Immunisation: 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.

Care for Those Affected: Some community members will become ill before a vaccine is available. To augment health care in traditional medical facilities, we may offer outreach services to their employees and families, collaborating with local health authorities. 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, our 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 our business and require innovative trouble shooting to maintain critical operations.

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. We as a business can play a crucial role in focusing on the needs of our workers during and following a pandemic, and providing stability in a time of crisis.

Economic Effects: Demand for our goods may drop substantially in domestic and international market. Reduced cash flow within the community will have ripple effects on surviving businesses.

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. Transportation systems could be impaired by absenteeism.

PRINCIPLES IN PANDEMIC PLANNING

Early and thoughtful planning can reduce the impacts of pandemic influenza, protect our essential business functions, and minimise financial losses for our business over the long term.

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 managers must understand the factors contributing to the spread of the disease.

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. We should 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. 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.

Identify Essential Business Function: We 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.

We 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. In as much as the influenza virus attacks people, skilled workers in essential organisational 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. In addition to interruptions to the supply side of our business, it would be wise to anticipate impacts on demand for products or services including transportation and port 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. Due to the unknowns surrounding pandemic events, businesses should be prepared to adjust operations to meet the demands of different situations.

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.

We should recognise the potential benefits of cooperative pandemic planning with others, and will make deliberate efforts to involve key organisations at all levels. Connections to consider include:

- Employees, unions, occupational health and safety committee
- Local health authorities
- Customers, especially significant client organisations
- Suppliers and service providers
- Chamber of Commerce and other partner businesses

PLAN OF ACTION 1: GET ORGANISED

Core Concepts

Pandemic Planning Team: The first step in preparing for a pandemic is to establish an internal planning group. It is advisable to assign responsibility for leading the planning process to one person, and ensure this Pandemic Crisis 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 organisational 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 before an outbreak, during an outbreak of the disease, and 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 Plan of Action 10.

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

Consider These Actions

1. Appoint a Pandemic Crisis Manager. Assign responsibility for pandemic planning to a senior manager with authority to lead a small internal group.
2. Assemble a pandemic planning team. 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 local health authorities. 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 Plan of Action of this guide. Assign responsibility for recording planning deliberations.

PLAN OF ACTION 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, we 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 our goods through alternate means.

Consider These Actions

1. Meet with local health authorities 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.

PLAN OF ACTION 3: PROTECT EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Core Concepts

Workplace Safety: Taking reasonable precautions to safeguard workers from predictable workplace hazards is our obligation towards our employee and the community. Protecting the health of employees not only reduces potential organisational 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. Prepare an Infection Control Measures Plan that is specific to the pandemic for organisational facilities.

Social Distance: Knowing that respiratory diseases are spread by close proximity, we should address the requirement to increase social distance in our 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, if the pathogen causing the pandemic is food borne. It may also be possible for some employees to work from their home depending on their roles.

Consider These Actions

1. Develop infection control measures. Promote hand washing practices and provide hand wash stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Regularly clean common touch surfaces within the workplace (e.g. doorknobs, handrails). Remind staff of cough and sneeze etiquette and other hygiene measures.
2. Increase social distance at the workplace. Implement measures to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact among employees. Establish policies for a flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts).
3. 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.

PLAN OF ACTION 4: PREPARE EMPLOYEE POLICIES

Core Concepts

Coping with Illness: Situations may arise during a pandemic that challenge our 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 our 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 our business facilities and 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 and use of part-time or retired staff.
3. Prepare plans to support workers during a pandemic. Consider the following worker support services such as transportation for critical employees to and from the workplace, child-care when schools are closed and mental health, stress counselling, and social services for staff and family members.

PLAN OF ACTION 5: PLAN FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Core Concepts

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

Priority Functions: The most important organisational functions to protect during a disease outbreak are those that must occur in the short-term to keep our business going. A six-week interruption of direct service delivery functions, for example, could have a great impact on us, 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 customers.

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 like high absenteeism, production facility closure, travel restrictions and interruption of supplies especially raw cashew and packaging materials. Examine the potential surge in demand for your business's products or service areas.
3. Analyse potential business impacts. Consider specific effects, such as absenteeism, including temporary loss of highly specialised 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 and restrictions on business-related travel.
4. Prepare to adapt operations. Identify the organisation structure that will serve in coordinating response. Consider the conditions for suspending operations altogether.

PLAN OF ACTION 6: PREPARE FOR SUPPLY AND SERVICE INTERRUPTION

Core Concepts

Stockpiles: We should list the items needed to continue critical business functions if supply flows were interrupted for several weeks, including raw cashew, packaging materials, supplies, and equipment, and identify where items could be stored.

Supplier and Service Duplication: This means making an effort before a pandemic arrives to find alternate sources of the supplies and services our business operation depends on. Contact alternate suppliers to establish working relationships ahead of the need.

Contingency Funds: We need to plan for contingency funds for such ongoing expenditures as employee wages and equipment maintenance if our business could face a significant income disruption during and after an influenza event.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify sources. List the sources of critical raw materials including packaging materials, supplies, services, and information. 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 sanitiser, 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 organisational insurance coverage to determine if continuity of business/loss of income coverage applies in pandemic situations.

PLAN OF ACTION 7: PREPARE TO FILL VACANCIES

Core Concepts

Impacts of Workforce Attrition: Workforce attrition could be the single most significant impact of a pandemic for our business. The loss of many workers at one time could affect mission-critical operations. 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 allocating new jobs to people will not be enough. All of our business operation functions 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. Identify special qualifications needed to perform critical services/functions.
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.
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. Manage security codes, access and passwords to reduce frustration for re-deployed or replacement personnel. Resolve with employee trade unions any issues related to temporarily filling positions vacated by prolonged illness or death among staff.

PLAN OF ACTION 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, organisational policies). Consider the native languages of workforce while preparing informational materials.

Develop Messages: Develop messages for employees on pandemic influenza, the importance of hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and staying home when they are ill. 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 means to communicate with employees about pandemic. Prepare materials for employee awareness, such as workplace signs and pamphlets. Develop a series of information sessions to educate staff about pandemic.
2. 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. Emphasise the importance of good hygiene and hand washing. Explain infection control measures, immunisation, 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 rumours with facts.

PLAN OF ACTION 9: INFORM OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Core Concepts

Maintaining Confidence: Considering the integrated nature of our business, the importance of sharing timely information with our partners and stakeholders cannot be overstated. At a time of uncertainty, anyone dealing with our company will appreciate accurate messages on the status of our operations. Communicating the infection control measures and backup plans to deal with illness and its effects will help maintain confidence in our business and our management.

Frequent Communication: Because the pandemic situation could change daily for any organisation, 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 production. Frequent updates on our website's News & Insights section may be the most cost-effective way of informing large numbers of stakeholders about our operational status. Communicate the status of operations, including any shutdowns, timelines for re-start, and alternative means of production and goods delivery.

Consider These Actions

1. Identify key stakeholders. Create an information contact list of external suppliers, customers, client and partner agencies, and keep the list up to date. Develop an email distribution list.
2. Confirm assumptions. Confer with primary customers and suppliers to determine their information requirements about our organisation during a pandemic. Monitor the news media for information released about your organisation.
3. Advise stakeholders of your preparedness plans. 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 organisational status information via newsletters and website.

PLAN OF ACTION 10: PREPARE A PANDEMIC INFLUENZA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Core Concepts

Record of Decisions: As noted in Plan of Action 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 organisation 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.

Communicate Policies with Others: A written plan communicates our assumptions and essential decisions to our 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 organisation, 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 detailed outline of the Pandemic Influenza Management Plan. 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 local health authorities. 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 our organisation 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.

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