	STANDARD	DATE 05/06/2010 Incident Commander Bill Hodson
	OPERATING	APPROVED Safety Officer Leonard Garcia
	GUIDELINE	TITLE: Influenza Pandemic/Biological Response

I. INTRODUCTION

This material is designed to help Command Team Members prepare and respond to the health and incident risks created by an influenza pandemic or similar biological catastrophe. The material has been drafted to provide a series of practical suggestions and options for prompt planning by Command and General staff

There is no one, single pandemic scenario. Incident Command Team’s must be flexible in planning needs, therefore, to be pragmatic and provide enough options for a Team to respond to a range of scenarios. Successful planning will involve talking with staff working and providing supplies. This material has been prepared to support workplaces doing that planning has not been drafted as prescriptive, legal advice.

Command and General staff will need to keep themselves informed of development and update their plans accordingly. In addition to the existing networks and organizations, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will be ongoing sources of information on the implications for workplaces, and public health.

As a starting point, there are some simple but important pieces of information to keep in mind:

A pandemic will affect your Incident, your staff and your team members – just how much will depend on the severity of the pandemic and how well prepared you are. Health experts (e.g. the World Health Organization and Department of Homeland Security) tell us it’s a matter of when, not if, a pandemic occurs.

You need to plan for it now – covering steps your team members can take before, during and after a pandemic. There is no one, single response you can plan. Your staff needs to be able to respond flexibly, depending on the situation.

In a pandemic situation, the biggest risk – and, therefore, the thing to try and eliminate, isolate or minimize as much as possible – is close contact between people. Think about your workplace and what is practical for you. Examples include:

Eliminate the risk of possible infection through person-to-person contact:

Require non-essential employees to work off incident without the need for face to face meetings

Work varied shift patterns, or extended of flexible hours to limit the number of people in the workplace at any one time.

Provide and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate and practical for your workplace e.g. N95 or N100 masks, gloves etc. and provide the associated training, waste disposal and decontamination facilities.

Provide training and improve facilities to maximize personal hygiene e.g. hand-washing techniques, foot-operated, lined waste bins.

Provide training and facilities to enable people to maintain social distancing i.e. so they are able to work far enough away from others to prevent cross infection.

II. PREVENTION/ EDUCATION

How to Protect Yourself and Your Incident

This guide will help you understand and prepare for some of the situations that may arise at work during a pandemic. It is a general guide and should not be considered as legal advice.

Here are some key points:

Health experts such as the WHO and those advising Department of Homeland Security (DHS) tell us it's a matter of when, not if, a pandemic will occur. Your workplace will be affected – just how much depends on the severity of the outbreak and how well you plan.

Success will require workers and employers to be flexible, and to work together cooperatively. The options you and your supervisor take during a pandemic will impact on how well your workplace survives the pandemic, and how quickly it recovers.

Ways to protect yourself and your workplace

During a pandemic the biggest risk for spreading the flu is close contact between people. That means you and your employer need to think about ways of avoiding person-to-person contact at work.

In a facility shared with other agencies such as a dispatch office, partition work space among agencies to reduce the number of people in contact with each other.

Communicate with others via telephone, computer or in some other non-face-to-face manner.

Think of ways to **minimize** the risk of infection. This could mean:

- Using the appropriate personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves
- Being vigilant about personal hygiene, such as hand washing

- Cleaning flat surfaces with disinfectant on a regular schedule
- Making sure you've been fully trained on hygiene and the use of protective equipment.
- Working far enough away from others to prevent spreading infection.

For more information on preparing for a pandemic, and to stay informed on new developments contact:

- Your Safety Representative
- Department of Homeland Security
- Influenza website: www.pandemicflu.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/)
- World Health Organization (www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html)

Command Teams will follow OPM and CDC emergency directions should a pandemic break out occur. If in a local area, the Line Officer believes there may be an emergency situation developing, he/she may want to increase timework capability especially with mission critical functions.

www.opm.gov

During a pandemic the biggest risk for spreading the flu is close contact between people. Management must consider ways to eliminate this risk, to isolate you from it, or to minimize the dangers.

For example, management may try to **eliminate** the risk of infection spreading through work by:

- Getting staff to work off incident
- Arranging for staff to work shifts or flexible hours, so they come into contact with fewer people

Management may also come up with ways to **minimize** the risk of infection. This could mean:

- Providing appropriate personal protective equipment, such as masks, gloves, and decontamination facilities
- Ensuring staff are trained, and are using this equipment
- Providing training and better facilities for personal hygiene, such as hand washing
- Arranging for employees to work far enough away from others to prevent spreading infection.

Although the law gives you and your management certain rights and obligations, these don't

give all the answers in a pandemic situation. You and your management will need to take a practical and human approach.

III. CONTROLLING SPREAD

Personal Hygiene

Basic personal hygiene measures should be reinforced and people should be required to practice them to minimize potential influenza transmission:

Cover nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing (preferably with a disposable single use tissue)

Immediately dispose of used tissues in a receptacle that can be collected without contaminating cleaning personnel

Do not sneeze or cough into your hand. If you do not have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve at the bend of your elbow

Adopt good hand washing/ hand hygiene practices, particularly after coughing, sneezing or using tissues.

Keep hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth, and nose

Ensure that adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available. This is a high planning priority as there may be interruption to the supply or shortages of soap, hand towels, and alcohol or bleach products.

Communicate hand and personal hygiene information to staff and visitors:

Hygiene notices should be posted in all workplace entrances, washrooms, hand washing stations and public areas

Use brochures, newsletters, global emails, and employee notice boards to inform your employees of the importance of hand hygiene and environmental cleaning during a pandemic.

Example of notices can be found in Appendix A another good source of notices and brochures is <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza/Employer>

APPENDIX 1 - HYGIENE NOTICES

HAND HYGIENE

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands!










Hand washing is the single most important measure to reduce the risks of transmitting infection from one person to another.

Hand washing with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash should be performed regularly. Hands should be thoroughly dried, preferably using disposable tissues or towels. Use the disposable towel to open the door. Have refuse cans placed in a position so that people can discard their towel on exit.

Hand washing and drying should always be done after coughing, sneezing or handling used tissues or after touching objects, materials or hard surfaces that may have been contaminated by someone else with the infectious illness.

Hand-to-face contact such as can occur during eating, normal, grooming, or smoking presents significant risks because of the potential for transmission of influenza from surfaces contaminated with wet respiratory droplets. Hand washing should always be carried out before and after eating, grooming, smoking or any other activity that involves hand-to-face contact.

HAND HYGIENE NOTICES

Hand Hygiene with Soap and Water		
<p>1. Remove jewelry. Wet hands with warm water</p> 	<p>2. Add soap to palms</p> 	<p>3. Rub hands together to create a lather</p> 
<p>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</p> 	<p>5. Clean knuckles, back of hands and fingers</p> 	<p>6. Clean the space between the thumb and index finger</p> 
<p>7. Work the finger tips into the palms to clean under the nails</p> 	<p>8. Rinse well under warm running water</p> 	<p>9. Dry with a single-use towel and then use towel to turn off the tap</p> 
<p>Minimum wash time 10-20 seconds.</p>		

Source: Vancouver Coastal Health's Regional Pandemic Influenza Response Plan

HAND HYGIENE WITH ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER

<p align="center">Hand Hygiene with Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer</p>		
<p>1. Remove jewelry. Apply enough product to open palms.**</p> 	<p>2. Rub hands together palms to palms</p> 	<p>3. Rub in between and around fingers</p> 
<p>4. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers</p> 	<p>5. Rub backs of hands and fingers. Rub each thumb.</p> 	<p>6. Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm</p> 
<p>7. Keep rubbing until hands are dry. **The volume required to be effective varies from product to product. Enough product to keep hands moist for <u>15 seconds</u> should be applied. Do not use these products with water. Do not use paper towels to dry hands.</p>		
<p>Note: Wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Certain manufacturers recommend washing hands with soap and water after 5-10 applications of gel.</p>		

Source: Vancouver Coastal Health’s Regional Pandemic Influenza Response Plan

APPENDIX 2- WORKPLACE CLEANING

During a pandemic, you will need to implement additional measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces (e.g. sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters). Transmission from contaminated hard surfaces is unlikely but influenza viruses may live up to two days on such surfaces.

Influenza viruses are inactivated by alcohol and by chlorine. Cleaning of environmental surfaces with a neutral detergent followed by a disinfectant solution is recommended. Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned often, preferably daily. The following table suggests the appropriate choice and concentration of disinfectants.

WORKPLACE CLEANING PRODUCTS

Disinfectants	Recommended Use	Precautions
<p>Sodium hypochlorite:</p> <p>1000 parts per million of available chlorine, usually achieved by a 1 in 5 dilution of hospital grade bleach.</p>	<p>Disinfection of material contaminated with blood and body fluids</p>	<p>Should be used in well-ventilated areas.</p> <p>Protective clothing required while handling and using undiluted bleach.</p> <p>Do not mix with strong acids to avoid release of chlorine gas.</p> <p>Corrosive to metals.</p>
<p>Granular chlorine:</p> <p>e.g. Det-Sol 5000 or Diversol, to be diluted as per manufacturer's instructions.</p>	<p>May be used in place of liquid bleach, if it is unavailable.</p>	<p>Same as above</p>
<p>Alcohol:</p> <p>e.g Isopropyl 70% ethyl alcohol 60%</p>	<p>Smooth metal surfaces, tabletops and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used</p>	<p>Flammable and toxic. To be used in well-ventilated areas. Avoid inhalation.</p> <p>Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment, flames and hot surfaces.</p> <p>Allow it to dry completely, particularly when using diathermy, as this can cause diathermy burns.</p>

Staff should be reminded not to share cups, dishes, and cutlery and ensure they are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water and after use.

When a person with suspected influenza is identified and has left the workplace, it is important that their work area/ office, along with any other known places they have been, are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Among other things, planning should identify the basic hygiene practices (including hand hygiene) to be followed by cleaners, protocols for the use of personal protection equipment (if recommended by WHO); and methods for waste disposal.

Air Conditioning

There is scientific and medical evidence that influenza can spread in inadequately ventilated internal spaces. WHO and the Department of Labor recommend all internal spaces should be well ventilated, preferably by fresh air via opening windows, or otherwise by properly designed and maintained air- conditioning systems.

Sun

Ultraviolet light kills the virus. Exposure to the sun, when possible, may help.

APPENDIX 3 - INCREASE SOCIAL DISTANCING

Another strategy to protect staff is minimizing their contact with others. Crowded places and large gatherings of people should be avoided, whether in internal or external spaces.

A distance of at least one meter (3 feet) should be maintained between people wherever practical. Larger distances are more effective.

Visiting or other contact with, sick people should be avoided wherever practical.

Suggestions on how to minimize contact include:

Avoid meeting people face to face – use the telephone, video conferencing and the internet to conduct business as much as possible – even when participants are in the same building.

Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone non-essential meetings/ gatherings/ workshops/ training sessions

If possible, arrange for employees to work from home or work variable hours to avoid crowding at the workplace

Practice “ghost” shift changes wherever possible, with the shift going off duty leaving the

workplace before the new shift enters. If possible, leave an interval before re-occupation of the workplace. If possible, thoroughly ventilate the workplace between shifts by opening doors and windows or turning up the air-conditioning

Avoid public transport: walk, cycle, drive a car or go early or late to avoid rush hour crowding on public transport

Bring lunch and eat at desk or away from others (avoid the cafeteria and crowded restaurants). Introduce staggered lunchtimes so numbers of people in the lunch room are reduced.

Do not congregate in break rooms, bathrooms, or other areas where people socialize. Do what needs to be done and then leave the area.

If a face-to-face meeting with people is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least one meter (3 feet) away from each other if possible; avoid shaking hands or hugging. Consider holding meetings in the open air and sunshine.

Set up systems where clients/ customers can pre-order/ request information via phone/ email/ fax and have order/ information ready for fast pick-up or delivery; and

Encourage staff to avoid recreational or other leisure classes/ meetings etc. where they might come into contact with infectious people.

APPENDIX 4 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the use personal protective equipment (PPE) may reduce, but not eliminate the possibility of becoming infected when a Pandemic occurs.

Individuals, such as those exposed to poultry and poultry products, veterinary workers and healthcare workers, should wear PPE.

Team members or other people who care for PANDEMIC infected patients should wear a mask, disposable nitrile gloves, tyvek gown, goggles that seal to the face, head and foot covering. Employees who are considered “essential personnel” and remain at work when illness is circulating in the community should wear PPE (including a mask) if they might be exposed to the pandemic virus in the workplace. PANDEMIC patients should also wear a mask when in contact with other people.

Preferred type of mask = N-95 or N-100 mask

Purchased at local hardware stores, through medical supply companies or via the internet. Ordered wholesale by your employer, although these are now being rationed by 3M.

Nitrile gloves can be purchased at local drug stores or via the internet.

When the pandemic occurs, masks likely will not be available because the infrastructure that supplies them will not be working. They are not made in the USA.

It is recommended by the manufacturer that you discard masks after 4-6 hours of use and that you do not re-use or share them. Put used masks and gloves in a sealed plastic bag and throw away with your household trash.

(Note: if the pandemic goes on for some time, plan to carefully put my used mask in a plastic sandwich bag, seal it, and place in the sun for several hours a day for 3 or 4 days. The virus survives on smooth surfaces for 3 days. Ultraviolet light kills the virus. This may not be the perfect solution, but it may be good enough if no masks are available.)

The use of PPE does not replace basic sanitary measures such as hand washing. Hand washing is essential to preventing the spread of any pandemic.

Be sure you know how to wear a mask properly. This includes:

- Securing ties behind head or placing elastic bands behind ears.
- Fitting the flexible band at top of the mask to the bridge of your nose.
- Fitting the mask snugly to your face and below your chin.

Wash your hands immediately after removing and disposing of a mask.

How to find a new supplier if my usual supplier is out of gloves, masks, or gowns:

FDA's Device Listing Database contains list of all medical devices currently in commercial distribution, including personal protective equipment.

What you should do if your personal protective equipment tears or rips:

If your gloves tear or rip, remove them carefully, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub, and put on new gloves. If your mask or gown rips, remove it carefully, change your clothes if they are soiled, and put on a new mask or gown.

If you think that your gloves, masks, or gown are defective in some way, you should contact the manufacturer and FDA's Med Watch Program.

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends that healthcare workers wear the following personal protective equipment during the care of a patient with suspected or confirmed flu (influenza):

Surgical masks, Medical gloves, Surgical gowns

For more information about CDC's recommendations for controlling the spread of the flu, see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>