

EMCBC Pandemic Continuity Plan

BACKGROUND

Most experts agree that there is a growing and significant threat of a global pandemic, but that there is no way to predict either exactly when it might occur or the severity of the impact. As with any of the risks that we face -- including natural disasters and the ongoing possibility of another terrorist attack -- it is imperative that all segments of society be prepared for such a threat.

In addition to the threat that a pandemic could pose to human health world-wide, few businesses will be insulated from the economic effects resulting from absenteeism in the workplace or from the downstream effects stemming from supply-chain and travel disruption. It is important for the EMCBC to be knowledgeable about the risks associated with the threat of an influenza pandemic and, in turn, to be adequately prepared for the possibility of a pandemic that would have significant social and economic costs.

CONCEPT AND OPERATIONS

General

This Pandemic Plan is activated when local conditions meet one of the recommended action levels provided by the DOE HQ Biological Event Monitoring Team (BEMT). A graded approach should be taken when implementing the recommended actions. The Recommended Action Matrix for Pandemic Influenza is provided in Attachment C of the COOP.

There are four areas identified for action in this plan:

- 1) Protecting the Health of Employees
- 2) Continuing Performance of Essential Functions
- 3) Supporting the Federal Response
- 4) Communicating with Stakeholders

Phase I: Activation and Relocation

Assessment – The COOP Point of Contact (POC) shall assess local conditions by monitoring office absenteeism, the local public health and emergency management information for the identified action levels. The COOP POC shall alert the Senior DOE Office personnel who with the COOP POC will make a coordinated assessment of the circumstances and the safe operability of the facility.

Notification - Internal notifications are made to DOE Employees via internal office telephone tree or other mechanism. Applicable external notifications are made to stakeholders and customers via telephone and email. Existing landline lines are the primary means of communication with cellular telephones used as a backup.

Relocation – Relocation to another facility is not a viable option for a pandemic. The risk and disruption will exist everywhere. Nevertheless, Essential Functions must still be performed.

Most employees should not come to work - To minimize exposure and transmission, most employees should be directed to remain at home (See EMCBC Policy on DOE-Flex, PS-322-02 or applicable site specific DOE-Flex procedures).

- Employees are expected to remain in regular contact with their managers.
- Depending on the Action Matrix level prepare to limit or stop non-essential travel
- Tele-work is encouraged – If work can be accomplished remotely, personnel should work online and over the phone. If needed occasional visits to the worksite could be arranged.
- Senior DOE Office personnel or designees will direct key personnel to report to work, as required, to perform Essential Functions. With significantly reduced staff and flexible work schedules, person-to-person contact can be minimized.

Strategies to minimize person-to-person contact

- Limit use of mass transit – Since most employees will not be required to report to work, those that do need to report should use private vehicles and avoid person-to-person contact on mass transit systems.
- Meetings and gatherings should be significantly restricted. An alternate to meeting or gatherings is teleconferences.
- EMCBC should also make use of shift work schedules to allow personnel to come to work for designated periods, but to minimize the number of personnel at work at any one time. Priority should be given to facilitate performance of Essential Functions.

Health Protection Measures

For personnel that do report to work, protective measures should be implemented to further minimize transmission.

- Employees are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.
- Wearing protective (surgical) masks, gloves, and other effective protective gear may be encouraged.

- Personnel are encouraged to avoid close contact with other employees.

One approach that can be considered is allowing a team of employees to remain at work for an extended period of time. Once the latency/incubation period for the disease has passed, and if the team avoids contact with the general population, increased person-to-person contact would not be a significant problem. For example, if the time between exposure and symptoms is 3 days, once a group of employees has remained at work for that period of time, it may be safe to assume the group is not infected and, therefore, cannot transmit the disease.

Other Special Considerations

- During this event, access to DOE facilities should be restricted to DOE personnel only. No visitors or temporary employees will be permitted access.
- As with any continuity event personnel accountability is critical (for those that report to work as well as those that stay home), Regular contact with all employees will be a requirement. Directors will have to remain aware of personnel availability and health, particularly since this can change from day to day. Under a worst case scenario there may be a need to replace personnel performing Essential Functions.

In the event that the EMCBC Office staff is significantly impacted, for example, key staff unavailable to perform their function(s), an unaffected Project Office may be delegated to assume the role of the EMCBC Office and implement recovery actions. This may include using DOE staff from other sites or by requesting support from Headquarters.

Phase II: Alternate Pandemic Facility Operations

- Commence office specific time sensitive critical business and support functions.
- Transition other less time sensitive functions and operations as time permits (if required or practical).

Phase III: Reconstitution (Recovery)

- Implement the return to normal operations.
- Notify all functional office personnel that disruption no longer exists.
- Notify any remaining affected personnel to report to work.

Administration and Logistics: The DOE EMCBC COOP will comply with security requirements and established personnel, health and safety policies and procedures. DOE EMCBC will request support of the appropriate HQ's office to ensure that resource support requirements for recovery and normal operations are addressed in terms of budgeting, resource allocation, staff assignments/workload, and equipment acquisition, maintenance and salvage.

DOE EMCBC functional offices (supervisors/direct reports) will conduct periodic reviews, at least annually, of their personnel notification system by conducting a review and update of their office "Call Down Lists/Telephone Tree". The action will be performed as changes warrant or not less than bi-annually. As Departmental and functional office missions' change, the time sensitive nature of functions, key personnel designations, and related operating activities should be reviewed by each functional manager and communicated to the EMCBC Emergency Management Specialist.

EMCBC should be prepared to support Service Agreement Office request(s) for support if the initiating event is of such magnitude to disrupt other EMCBC Service Agreement sites. HQ's has not delegated critical function support to EMCBC but EMCBC must prepare to support potential requests for assistance. This may include temporary staffing support.