

Emergency Health and Medical Services Administration

MEDIA PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

This checklist¹ provides guidance for editors and publishers in developing and improving influenza pandemic response and preparation plans. These steps are not in chronological order. More information about pandemic flu is available at doh.dc.gov or www.pandemicflu.gov. Similar plans should be developed for maintaining operations during emergencies that involve destruction of property and equipment, loss of utilities and impassability of roads and bridges. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily through person-to-person contact and causes serious illness or death. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. At present, avian (bird) flu—H5N1—is a growing public health concern. H5N1 currently affects the bird population. It has not spread from birds to humans without close, sustained contact with infected birds. There is little evidence that the disease is spread through person-to-person contact. However, there is concern that the virus may mutate and begin to spread from person to person.

1. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your organization and its mission			
Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the organization’s mission to determine what organizational functions would have to be altered in the event of a pandemic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on outside resources your organization depends on (newspaper distribution process, printing, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outline the organizational structure to be used during a pandemic when staffing is reduced, including key contacts with multiple back-ups .
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Test your response and coordination using a drill or exercise.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local health department to develop key messages to use during the outbreak to provide information to the public in a timely and accurate manner (202-671-5000)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use the International Federation of Journalists and the International News Safety Institute’s safety codes for journalists to develop plans for making assignments to keep reporters out of harm’s way
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Obtain current contact information for key health and other county public information contacts (202-671-5000)

¹ Information from this checklist is based on Newsroom Planning for Crisis Coverage and Bioterrorism, A Journalist’s Guide to Covering Bioterrorism. (Radio and Television News Directors Foundation; “Self Care for the Media,” Terrorism and Other Public Health Emergencies: A Reference Guide for the Media. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

2. Communicate with and educate your staff and persons in the communities you serve			
Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite your local health department (202-671-5000) to provide an introductory briefing to editorial staff on the bird flu situation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local health department to provide prevention and treatment information to staff and their families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use the US Dept. of Health and Human Services 11 Steps for Personal Safety to train reporters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide individual and family preparedness guidance and information to staff to be self-sustaining during an emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage the community, including local businesses, schools, colleges, medical providers to prepare for a pandemic flu outbreak. (Checklists available online at doh.dc.gov or www.pandemicflu.gov).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local health dept to obtain information to brief all reporters about pandemic flu to enable effective coverage in the event of an outbreak. (Check DC Department of Health at doh.dc.gov or call 202-671-5000 for current information)
3. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your staff and the communities you serve			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish mechanisms to cover essential tasks if 30-50% of your staff were ill or caring for their seriously ill family members
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish a list of critical priorities to be covered and determine alternative mechanisms for addressing vital tasks
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local health department (202-671-5000) to consider first responder-type priority vaccination policies in the event of an outbreak for key editorial staff.
4. Set up/review/clarify policies to follow during a pandemic			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies and practices for preventing the spread of influenza at the worksite (requiring respiratory hygiene in places and situations with public interaction)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review assignments and policies to enable telecommuting to reduce transmission of infection

5. Allocate resources to protect your staff and persons in the community you serve

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide for sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (hand-hygiene products, tissues, face masks) at convenient locations for staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrange for availability of medical consultation and advice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhance communications and information technology needed to support employee telecommuting where possible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider establishing a pooled reporter arrangement with other media outlets in the event of severe staffing shortages

6. Coordinate with external organizations

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider participating in the District of Columbia Department of Health's Media Advisory Team to improve communication during emergencies. (Call 202-442-9186).
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