

H1N1 Influenza Pandemic Guide for Small and Mid-sized Employers

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility - individuals, families, corporations, and government - in the communities where we live and work. Every community is vulnerable to a variety of natural and manmade hazards, such as severe weather, chemical spills and utility disruptions.

Why Plan?

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates over 40 percent of businesses never reopen following a disaster. Of the remaining companies, at least 25 percent will close within 2 years. The impacts of these events upon business can be reduced if companies are aware of and prepare an emergency plan to address these hazards in advance.

The most recent hazard to emerge is the novel H1N1 virus. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization declared the beginning of a global H1N1 Pandemic. A pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and starts spreading as easily as normal influenza – by coughing and sneezing. Because the virus is new, the human immune system will have no pre-existing immunity. Once a fully contagious virus emerges, its global spread is considered inevitable.

While health officials consider the overall severity of the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic to be moderate they urge continued vigilance since influenza viruses can be unpredictable. Past pandemics have circled the globe in two and sometimes three waves returning with increased severity in the second and third waves. Health officials are concerned that the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus could return this fall in a more virulent form. The flu, seasonal as well as H1N1, is a serious disease. Every year in the United States, on average 5% to 20% of the population gets seasonal flu; more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and; about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes.

Take Action Now

Now is the time to review your company's business continuity plan in anticipation of the fall flu season. Employers that have not considered the impact of a pandemic influenza upon their business should use this time to develop a plan.

Key objectives of your emergency plan:

- ▶ Reduce transmission of the virus among employees and customers;
- ▶ Minimize illness among employees and customers;
- ▶ Maintain mission-critical operations and services;
- ▶ Minimize social disruptions and the economic impact of an outbreak.

Stay informed

Step 1

1

Stay current with the most recent information on H1N1 in your community. Seek out trusted sources of information often for updated situation reports and guidance on the H1N1 virus.

Contact your local public health director and emergency management director to make sure you understand what their plans and capabilities are, and how they can support you and your employees.

Check to see if the local jurisdiction has an **emergency notification service**. Find your town's website: <http://www.ct.gov/ctportal/cwp/view.asp?a=843&q=257266>.

Connecticut local public health directors and emergency management directors:

- CT local public health directors: https://www.han.ct.gov/local_health/localmap.asp
- CT local emergency management directors: http://www.ct.gov/demhs/lib/demhs/emergmgmt/local_emg_mgmt_public_contacts.pdf#48142

Additional websites with valuable information to prepare for the H1N1 virus:

- CDC Flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- State Health Department Websites: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/states.htm>
- U.S. Government One-Stop flu portal: <http://www.flu.gov/>
- World Health Organization (WHO): Influenza A (H1N1) <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a free email subscription service allowing CDC.gov users to receive alerts by e-mail. Sign up at www.cdc.gov.

Be wary of Internet, e-mail, and other ads promoting products that prevent, cure, treat, or diagnose the H1N1 influenza virus. Some of these ads promote fraudulent flu remedies. When in doubt, check with your health provider or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at www.fda.gov.

Step 2

2

Communicate, communicate and communicate.

Your employees are your business's most critical resource. Keep them apprised of your business continuity plan. Detail how your organization plans to communicate with employees, local authorities, customers and others before, during and after a disaster.

- Prepare an emergency contact list, include employee emergency contact information
- Consider these communication methods:
 - ◊ Phone call tree
 - ◊ Password-protected page on the company website
 - ◊ An email alert
 - ◊ Call-in voice recording
 - ◊ Establish an account on one of the social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc. Create closed/secret groups for your employees, suppliers, and/or customers.

Educate your employees on how they can protect themselves from the H1N1 influenza virus. The CDC has a number of informational flyers and other resources that you can download and distribute to your employees:

- **H1N1 Flu & You:** Provides basic information on H1N1 including signs and symptoms, how the virus is spread, and contagious period.
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>
- **What To Do if You Get Flu-Like Symptoms:** Provides information what to do if an individual is ill, signs of a medical emergency and when to seek treatment.
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm>
- **H1N1 Flu PowerPoint Presentation:** This CDC presentation is available to businesses to provide general information about H1N1 flu to employees, constituents and other partners.
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/>

4 simple steps to keep you and your employees healthy . . . and your business in business

Protect employee and customer health and lessen the spread of H1N1 Influenza virus.

Step 3

3

Employers should promote everyday hygiene measures by:

- Prominently displaying posters that remind employees about hand washing, cough etiquette and avoiding contact with sick persons.
- Clean Hands Save Lives
- Cover Your Cough
- Health Alert: H1N1
• The CDC recommends that individuals who are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for 7 days after symptoms begin or until individuals have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
• Employers should provide infection control supplies (e.g. hand hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal, cleaning supplies) at all business locations.

There are many online tools available to make accessing H1N1 information quick and easy.

A few to try:

Widget to post



Swine Flu Tutorial



Poster



Step 4

4

Plan to stay in business.

Every employer should have an emergency plan that clearly outlines how the business will function in an emergency. How will the business operate if 30 percent of the staff is absent due to illness, school/day care closure, or fear of exposure to H1N1 influenza for an extended period of time? A pandemic “wave” could linger in a community for six to eight weeks.

The plan should also include identifying an emergency coordinator, specifying what functions must be maintained and the backup personnel that will be available if the individuals usually performing those functions are not available, potential alternative work place locations (such as working at home), and a communication strategy. Check with your key suppliers regarding the status of their business continuity plans to assure that your supply chain will not be disrupted.

Contact your local emergency management director for assistance in developing the plan or visit www.ready.gov/business.

Here are easy to use templates to get started:

Sample Emergency Plan

<http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/sampleplan.pdf>

What Does It Cost?

<http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/cost.pdf>

Emergency Supplies Checklist

http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/emergency_supplies.pdf

Insurance Discussion Form

<http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/insuranceform.pdf>

Computer Inventory Form

<http://www.ready.gov/business/downloads/computerinventory.pdf>

H1N1 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC GUIDE FOR SMALL AND MID-SIZED EMPLOYERS

The Business Council of Fairfield County has compiled the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic Guide as a resource for small and mid-sized employers located throughout Fairfield County, Connecticut.

Based on the input of our Health Care Leadership Council and our Security and Crisis Management Council, the Pandemic Guide is an invaluable source of contacts and information to be included in your pandemic planning efforts.

For more information on The Business Council of Fairfield County, please contact us at 203-359-3220 or visit us at www.BusinessFairfield.com.

Publication of this guide is made possible through the generous support of the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut.

For further information:

Business Council of Fairfield County: Pandemic Planning Resources

<http://www.businessfairfield.com/pandemicplanning.htm>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/h1n1; 800-CDC-INFO / (800-232-4636) / TTY: (888) 232-6348; 24 Hours Daily

Connecticut Department of Public Health

<http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/site/default.asp>

Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Regional Offices

<http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1903&q=295316&demhsNav=|>

OSHA Fact Sheet

<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/employers-protect-workers-flu-factsheet.html>

U.S. Government Flu Portal

www.flu.gov

Poster: Influenza A(H1N1) How to Protect Yourself and Others

http://www.paho.org/english/ad/WHO_InfluenzaPoster_Eng.jpg

Ready Business

www.ready.gov/business

Telecommute CT!

<http://www.telecommutect.com/>

World Health Organization

www.who.int

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