

List of Questions and Initiatives for Action Planning for Essential Services/Functions

Initiatives for action planning

Some proactive initiatives listed below can help you formulate contingency and/or action plans:

Activation of plan:

1. Has a notification system been documented to activate/terminate the contingency plan?
2. Who has the decision-making authority and what are the identified essential services/functions?
3. Who are their alternates if they are unavailable?

Planning:

1. Have there been discussions with key external partners (e.g. customers, suppliers) regarding their pandemic-readiness plans for business continuity?
2. Is there a need to involve external individuals in the preparation and review of a Business Continuity Plan for your organization (e.g. elected officials, unions, legal counsel etc.)?
3. Has the decision-making process been reviewed and documented?
4. Have all relevant issues/implications and action plans been documented?
5. Have alternatives to face-to-face group meetings during a pandemic emergency been considered? This is particularly important to prevent the spread of influenza as it is transmitted easily from person to person (before a person begins to exhibit symptoms) through coughing and sneezing, or through contact with contaminated surfaces such as unwashed hands, phones and eating utensils.
6. Have plans been developed for potential work alternatives such as alternate work sites for key people at risk, and arrangements made for the possibility of working from home?
7. Has each essential service been reviewed to consider the implications of modifying, reducing and/or eliminating the service?

Policies and procedures:

1. Have existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been reviewed, and revised as needed?

Surveillance/attendance:

1. Is there a process established to monitor staff absenteeism within each business unit?
2. What level of staff absenteeism will necessitate a change to the delivery of any essential service/function?
3. If your organization can no longer function due to extremely high absenteeism, what are the implications? What business unit/divisions would

still be required to continue (i.e., finance, human resources) to provide employee support?

Delivery of essential services to the community:

1. Does your business have a responsibility to provide services to the community during an emergency?

Delivery of services:

1. What are the implications when a specific essential service/function needs to be modified? (Consider impact with reduction in services.)
2. Identify any options that may exist in order to maintain each essential service/function, such as cancelling vacations, approving overtime, redeploying staff, cross-training, contracting services out, using volunteers, part-time staff, retired staff, other staff resources, mutual aid, etc...
3. Consider the sustainability of service reductions over a number of weeks or months.

Human resources:

1. Will cross training be required?
2. Do re-deployed staff and/or volunteers require any security checks or special clearance?
3. Are single incumbent positions, security codes, access and passwords an issue?
4. Do you have staff from other areas that can be re-allocated to these types of positions?
5. Are there issues related to a collective agreement?
6. Do you require any advance approval to use staff that may not have the necessary certifications, licence, etc?
7. What are the implications pertaining to due diligence, liability (legal/civil), public image and confidence?
8. Has a list of resource needs been developed, including procurement of people and equipment/materials, as well as source and contact information for each?

Communications:

1. Have you prepared a "Communication Strategy" for internal and external partners?

Testing the plan:

1. Has the Business Continuity Plan for your organization/business been tested?
2. Has a process been established to conduct regular reviews of the Business Continuity Plan for your organization/business?

Communicate with your workers:

1. Talk to your workers NOW and work together to plan for an emergency.
2. Keep a current list of phone numbers for your employees so that you can contact them during an emergency.

3. Encourage workers to get an annual influenza vaccination ("flu shot").
4. Help your workers prepare emergency kits for themselves and their families.
5. Educate workers on the importance of:
 - Hand washing
 - Respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes, using disposable tissues when possible)
 - Healthy diet
 - Exercise
 - How to recognize the difference between influenza ("flu") and a cold (influenza is much more severe, it hits you very suddenly, you have fever and aches)
 - The difference between "seasonal flu" and "pandemic flu" (seasonal flu comes every year, pandemic flu is when the flu strain changes and people may become much sicker than usual, and some may die).

Reduced number of workers:

You may only have half of your workers during a pandemic. Some will be sick, and some may stay home to care for children or sick family members. Here are some ideas on how you can keep your business open during a pandemic or other emergency.

1. Limit some of your services. At a minimum, try to provide essential services during a pandemic or emergency situation.
2. Reduce the hours you are open for business.
3. Cross-train your employees. Make sure you don't have only one or two workers who know how to do a critical part of your work. If they became ill, you would have difficulty keeping your business open.
4. Recall and retrain retired workers. Keep phone numbers and addresses of workers who have retired. You may need to ask them to help during a pandemic or other emergency.
5. Plan on selling, servicing and making products with fewer workers.
6. If you are out sick, will your business continue to operate? Identify workers who can make key decisions in the absence of owners/managers.

Social distancing:

If a pandemic occurs, you may be asked to have your business participate in social distancing. This means that people should stay at least 3 feet apart from each other. Here are some ideas that can help:

- Encourage frequent hand washing
- Limit face-to-face contact
- Try to reduce the number of people standing in lines or crowds
- Ask customers to stand further away from workers and each other
- Install plexiglass panels between workers and customers
- Use telephones to communicate with customers or internal staff
- Stop handshaking
- Spread out seating in meetings, or meet via teleconference
- Stop sharing of workstations
- Avoid unnecessary meetings
- Limit the number of people on elevators, and encourage people to use the stairs

- Have your business add or stagger shifts, with fewer workers per shift, to increase the distance between employees
- Have your employees work from home.

Plan ahead:

If a pandemic occurs, keeping your workers healthy is one of your biggest priorities. Sick workers should stay at home because they can infect your other healthy workers.

1. Review your sick leave policies. During a public health emergency, sick workers must not come to work, even if you are short-staffed. Do not allow sick employees to stay at work. You must not punish employees if they are sick during an emergency. Establish clear policies and guidelines now, that will help employees understand options and expectations for when they are ill.
2. What will your business do if a worker becomes ill while at work? Establish clear policies now.
3. Provide soap and hot water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers to your employees. Provide disposable tissues.
4. Mass transit (such as crowded subways or buses) may be suspended during a pandemic. Gasoline may become very expensive and/or difficult to get. How will your employees get to work?
5. Develop infection-control practices, such as daily decontamination of office surfaces like phones, keyboards, etc.

Other things to consider:

1. Long-distance travel may be temporarily stopped. Try to avoid travel (especially to affected areas) by using teleconferencing or videoconferencing. See if there are local suppliers available for your business.
2. Do you have employees with special needs, such as disabled workers or those unable to read/write, etc? How will they be cared for?
3. If a pandemic occurs, your suppliers may be cut off. Can you increase your inventory of raw materials?
4. How will you communicate with your customers, suppliers, and the general public during an emergency? Do you have a Website? Use password-protected Websites to communicate sensitive information with employees.
5. Make sure you can access TV, radio and/or the Internet at work, to follow developments as they occur.
6. How will your business be affected by a pandemic? For example, if mass gatherings are cancelled, would your business be affected? Some businesses may be very busy during a pandemic, such as gas stations, grocery stores, etc.