

# Health Emergency Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

## Introduction

As part of the [Insert Department / Organization Name] Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the health emergency section will outline processes and procedures associated with incidents affecting the health and well-being of employees.

Health emergencies may present unique circumstances that require only certain components of the COOP, such as Personnel Management, to be implemented. These type of emergencies can present increased employee absenteeism (i.e. influenza), prompt social distancing as a preventative measure (i.e. pandemic), or other alternative workplace issues that may require the enactment of this COOP plan. Types of health emergencies, and other critical situations, include, but are not limited to:

- **Influenza & Other Viral Outbreaks:** Influenza and other viral outbreaks are health illnesses that can be easily transmitted from human-to-human contact.
- **Bioterrorism:** Bioterrorism is the threat of or the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or toxins used to cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants.
- **Chemical Emergencies:** A chemical emergency occurs when a hazardous substance has been released that has the potential for harming people's health. Chemical releases can be unintentional, as in the case of an industrial accident, or intentional, as in the case of a terrorist attack.
- **Mass Casualty Incidents:** An MCI may cause employees to become ill or suffer emotional/physical stress even if they are not at or near the scene.

Typically, a COOP plan will be enacted for health emergencies when absenteeism in the workplace approaches 30 – 40 % of the workforce. Instances where this may occur include widespread viral outbreaks, such as an influenza pandemic.

**Table 1: Pandemic Influenza**

<i>Pandemic Influenza</i>
A potentially global disease outbreak.
Individuals have no previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity
Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications
Health systems may be overwhelmed
Vaccine may not be available in the early stages of a pandemic
Effective antivirals may be in limited supply
Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent
May cause major impact on society (e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses,
Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

Source: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

## Departmental / Organizational Processes and Action Items

During a health emergency, the following processes and action items will be conducted:

1. Communicate health emergency situation or applicable incident to County Mayor's Office.

[In this space, identify department / organization processes applicable to this objective]

2. Identify department procedure to document employees ill during this time, including County and department policies regarding sick leave and other applicable policies.

[In this space, identify department / organization processes applicable to this objective]

3. Identify chain of command during a health crisis. The chart below outlines a responsible person and alternate for this department / organization.

[Assign primary chain of command and alternate chain of command during a health emergency or pandemic event. Also, identify a primary and alternate contact for day-to-day updates/correspondence on health related information within your department / organization].

Health Emergency Command Group		
	<i>Responsible Person</i>	<i>Alternate</i>
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Title</b>		
<b>Contact Info (Phone, Email)</b>		
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Title</b>		
<b>Contact Info (Phone, Email)</b>		
<b><i>Department / Organization Contact for Health Related Information and Planning</i></b>		
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Title</b>		
<b>Contact Info (Phone, Email)</b>		

4. Activation of COOP during a health emergency (i.e. offsite or alternate worksite, laptops, etc).

[In this space, identify department / organization processes applicable to this objective]

5. Reporting and monitoring of health incident.

[In this space, identify department / organization processes applicable to this objective]

### Preventative Measures and Tips

During any type of health emergency, preventative measures can be taken to mitigate the effects on the workforce. Such measures include:

- Encourage employees to develop family preparedness plans.
- Participate in and promote public health efforts within the department / organization.
- Implement prevention and control actions recommended by your public health officials and providers.
- Identify and adopt department / organization practices that encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Practice good health habits, including eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, and getting sufficient rest and take these common-sense steps to stop the spread of germs.
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
  - Stay away from others as much as possible if you are sick.
- Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond.
  - Consult [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) frequently for updates on national and international information on pandemic influenza.
  - Use national and local pandemic hotlines that will be established in the eventuality of a global influenza outbreak.
  - Listen to radio and television and read media stories about pandemic flu.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) may be utilized based on the type and severity of the health emergency and its use varies based on the setting of the employees, i.e., general office, hospital, health care provider setting, etc. Adhere to guidance and recommendations given by public health officials at the time of the health emergency. PPE items can include some or all of the items below:

- OSHA approved disposable facemasks, surgical masks, N95 respirators
- Gloves
- Alcohol based hand-sanitizer (individual units or sanitizer stations)
- Antibacterial surface wipes or sprays

### **Important Links and Resources**

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)
- Pandemic Flu: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> (seasonal flu)
- Florida Department of Health Department:
  - [www.floridahealth.gov/](http://www.floridahealth.gov/)
  - [www.doh.state.fl.us/](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/)
  - [www.MyFluSafety.com](http://www.MyFluSafety.com)