



## TOWN OF MADISON CONNECTICUT

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### **PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESSES**

The Madison Health Department reflects the interest of the entire community in keeping local businesses running, to the extent possible, in the event of a Pandemic Flu outbreak. We encourage all business owners and managers to consider the potential disruptions an outbreak could cause and to make reasonable plans to minimize their effects.

Pandemic Flu is like the annual flu except that it is a new strain. As a result, we will not have any natural immunity to it. Pandemic outbreaks have occurred three times in the last century and will come again. No one can say when. Each outbreak varies in severity but they are usually more widespread than the annual variety and in some cases are very severe. Estimates are that up to 40% of the workforce could be unavailable for work as the disease moves through a community. There will be no effective vaccine until it has had time to move through the population for several months. Anti-viral drugs can decrease the symptoms but will not be available in sufficient quantity to help most people.

Pandemic flu could disrupt normal life in very profound ways with schools closed, public gatherings cancelled, routine services unavailable as well as disruption to food supplies and health care systems. The question for business operators is how to minimize the personal and financial risk while still providing products and services to the extent possible.

Businesses are as diverse as people and so there can be no one-size-fits-all preparation plan. Some businesses would benefit from formal written contingency plans while others need only a list of items to consider in the event the flu strikes. What follows is a list of things business operators may need to consider in order to minimize risk. In any case we recommend each business have at least a rudimentary plan, that it be written and that several people have access to it.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER – THINGS TO DO:

1. List the resources you have now that you could not do without
  - Employees
  - Suppliers
  - Outside contractors
  - Municipal services
  - Emergency cash flow source



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2. Contacts: make a list of ALL contacts you might need with as many backup means of contact as possible.
  - Employees
  - Potential temporary employees
  - Suppliers
  - Clients
3. In a severe emergency are there other similar businesses, even competitors, with whom you could have mutual aid understandings.
4. Communications: could you carry out key communications from a remote location? Could someone do it for you if you were incapacitated?
5. How far could you scale back and still provide products or services
  - Fewer services
  - Shorter days
  - Fewer days per week
6. How would you get word of changes out to the public?
7. What critical building and equipment maintenance must be performed during limited operation or temporary closure?
8. Can you protect your inventory during closure?
9. Are there special security issues with your type of business or business location?
10. If you were closed for a time, would critical equipment maintenance be missed?
11. What special considerations would be important for re-opening after a closure?
12. Would required scheduled payments be made on time if you or your office staff were unable to make them?
13. Do you have a Sick Policy for employees that would prohibit them from working when ill?
  - Should that policy be in effect now?
14. Could you set your workplace up to minimize face-to-face contact?
  - Would staggered work hours or days be possible?
  - Do you have employees who could work from home?
  - Could you reduce office hours or open fewer days?
  - How would that information get out to staff – customers – suppliers?
15. Who else needs to know about the plan – Do they have a copy?
16. Do you encourage employees to follow good hygiene, especially hand washing?
17. Promote cough etiquette: Cover your cough. Don't cough into your hands ( tissue or sleeve).
18. Have employees watch the following short video: <http://www.coughsafe.com/media.html>
19. Do you provide facial tissue and hand sanitizer? Why not start now?