

Pandemic Prevention, Preparation and Response:

How you can prepare your place of business for
the next influenza pandemic

Similar to SARS, we now face a new potential pandemic of coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Health officials have already confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission, and as we wait for more information to become available, we want to ensure your organization is prepared. At Aspiria, we believe in a proactive approach to health and wellness in the workplace. We have therefore created a Pandemic Preparation Guide to help you organize an orchestrated response to the increasing outbreak of coronavirus in China and abroad. This guide will not only serve to protect your employees and colleagues, but also ensure that your business continues to function during a pandemic crisis.

Although the SARS pandemic in 2003 caught many of us off-guard, vital lessons were learned during that difficult time. The most important lesson learned was that we were not properly prepared for the consequences of a highly contagious, debilitating and sometimes fatal disease. Simple prevention measures such as hand-washing and disinfecting became a focus in the media. It was not uncommon to see people wearing surgical masks at the malls and grocery stores. Quarantines were implemented and enforced. All of these phenomena had a severe impact on the Canadian psyche, not to mention the economy.

The guide has been developed in a checklist format. It is meant to serve as a resource to steer you through all the different phases of prevention, preparation and response. It paves a critical path for you to follow in order to ensure that all key areas of your organization are covered. While the checklist is extensive, your organization does not necessarily need to implement all of the steps presented. Rather, the list is a guide to help you and your organization create a plan that best suits your particular circumstances.

During times of crisis, levels of stress increase exponentially. Aspiria is here to support you and your organization through any difficult time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you or your colleagues need to talk to someone, help is just a phone call away. As always, please call 1.877.ASPIRIA (234.5327).

1.1 Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your business:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning. The planning process should include input from all stakeholders. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify essential employees and other critical inputs (e.g. raw materials, suppliers, sub-contractor services/ products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations by location and function during a pandemic. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train and prepare ancillary workforce (e.g. contractors, employees in other job titles/descriptions, retirees). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and plan for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your products and/or services during a pandemic (e.g. effect of restriction on mass gatherings, need for hygiene supplies). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine potential impact of a pandemic on company business financials using multiple possible scenarios that affect different product lines and/or production sites. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine potential impact of a pandemic on business-related domestic and international travel (e.g. quarantines, border closures). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information from community public health, emergency management, and other sources and make sustainable links. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement an exercise/drill to test your plan, and revise periodically. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.2 Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your employees and customers:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forecast and allow for employee absences during a pandemic due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees and between employees and customers (refer to CDC recommendations). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and track annual influenza vaccination for employees. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic, and improve services as needed. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate employee access to and availability of mental health and social services during a pandemic, such as your EAP, corporate, community, and faith-based resources, and improve services as needed. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify employees and key customers with special needs, and incorporate the requirements of such persons into your preparedness plan. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.3 Establish policies to be implemented during a pandemic:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a pandemic (e.g. non-punitive, liberal leave), including policies on when a previously ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish policies for flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the worksite (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite (e.g. infection control response, immediate mandatory sick leave). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas (consider both domestic and international sites), evacuating employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and guidance for employees returning from affected areas (refer to CDC travel recommendations). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's response plan, altering business operations (e.g. shutting down operations in affected areas), and transferring business knowledge to key employees. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.4 Allocate resources to protect your employees and customers during a pandemic:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal) in all business locations. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance communications and information technology infrastructures as needed to support employee telecommuting and remote customer access. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure availability of medical consultation and advice for emergency response. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.5 Communicate to and educate your employees:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and disseminate programs and materials covering pandemic fundamentals (e.g. signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g. hand hygiene, coughing/sneezing etiquette, contingency plans). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumours and misinformation and plan communications accordingly. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information to employees about your pandemic preparedness and response plan. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information for the at-home care of ill employees and family members. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop platforms (e.g. hotlines, dedicated websites) for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way, including redundancies in the emergency contact system. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information (domestic and international) and resources for obtaining counter-measures (e.g. vaccines and anti-virals). 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.6 Coordinate with external organizations and help your community:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with insurers, health plans, and major local healthcare facilities to share your pandemic plans and understand their capabilities and plans. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with municipal, provincial, and local public health agencies and/or emergency responders to participate in their planning processes, share your pandemic plans, and understand their capabilities and plans. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with local and/or provincial public health agencies and/or emergency responders about the assets and/or services your business could contribute to the community. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share best practices with other businesses in your communities, chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following websites are reliable sources of news and information regarding the current situation with coronavirus, 2019-nCoV.

[Government of Canada Website](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website](#)

[World Health Organization Website](#)

*Source: [Pandemicflu.gov/professional/business/businesschecklist](https://pandemicflu.gov/professional/business/businesschecklist).