

Appendix C: Procedures for Disease Pandemic Situation

Influenza pandemics have swept across the United States three times in the last century. It has been predicted that another flu pandemic is likely, although no authority can forecast precisely when, where, or in what form another pandemic flu outbreak will occur.

This Appendix to the City's Emergency Operations Plan addresses the following:

- **Employee leave due to illness or family care**
- **Maintaining adequate staffing levels**
- **Providing accurate and important information to the public**
- **Infection prevention and control in the workplace**

The City of Bowling Green will strive to continue to provide uninterrupted service to its citizens during an outbreak of pandemic flu. The City administration must anticipate operating with fewer than the normal number of employees and implementing policies which will help prevent the spread of this disease. Working in conjunction with the Wood County Pandemic Flu Task Force, more specific plans and procedures are in development.

In a time before a disease pandemic, it is vitally important that personnel begin to prepare themselves and their families to cope with the impacts such an outbreak would have. Personnel are advised to assemble a home disaster supply kit. Basic medical supplies should be stockpiled at their residences for ready availability. Personnel are advised to develop a plan for child care should Bowling Green experience an extended school closure.

JOB FUNCTIONS

Essential job functions: Each Department/Division Head and Superintendent is charged with identifying essential job functions required to maintain operations during a pandemic. It is projected that under pandemic conditions, absenteeism could exceed 50%. It is vital that adequate staffing is available so that City operations and public services can go on, unimpeded.

Each Department must answer these questions: What are critical staff numbers and the skills required to keep essential sectors of City operations running— at what level do certain operations stop? What staff reassignments will be needed for expanded or diminished demand of services? Do certain systems rely on periodic physical intervention by key individuals to keep them going?

Primary and alternate staff: Assess skill requirement needs and identify core and alternate staff to fill essential job functions as absenteeism may exceed 50%. Ensure that personnel contact information, including after hours and emergency numbers, are up to date. Can your department call upon other human resources (e.g. volunteers, retirees, temps) if there is a high level of absenteeism?

Police and Fire obligations: Personnel of the Police and Fire Divisions must be reminded of their obligation to report to work during a pandemic. Employees are encouraged to develop a personal/family disaster plan to ensure that home and family obligations are attended to and do not require their presence. The more prepared employees are, the more they may be relied upon when an emergency occurs (this was an important lesson learned following Hurricane Katrina, when officers abandoned their posts). Staff should be reminded to plan for the care of children who may be home from school, ill family members, etc.

Reassignments: Consider that staff may need to be reassigned to other city agencies/ departments; assess how their job functions will be filled.

Training: Cross-train employees so that they can fill essential job functions to maintain continuity of service, if needed.

Facility closure/suspension of city services: Should the number of employees absent due to illness make untenable the continuation of certain city services, or local health conditions indicate the need for heightened precautions, the Municipal Administrator may order elected city facilities to close or suspend services.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE DUE TO ILLNESS OR FAMILY CARE

Employees infected with pandemic flu or caring for ill family members should first use their accrued sick leave when taking time off work. Accrued vacation time shall be used when sick leave is exhausted. Upon the exhaustion of vacation time, a medical leave of absence without pay may be taken (see **Administrative Instructions Nos. 1, 17, and 33**).

Employees wishing to isolate themselves from the potential of illness are required to use vacation time, and, if and when such time is exhausted, to pursue a medical leave of absence without pay. Any questions regarding leave policies under a pandemic situation should be posed to the Personnel Director. Consult with the Personnel Department regarding emergency personnel policies that allow for employee compensation during absences due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, trauma, isolation, or quarantines.

Forms of leave available to employees under a pandemic or other emergency medical situation:

Paid leave options:

- Sick Leave
- Vacation
- Personal Business Leave (if available)
- Compensatory Leave (instead of overtime pay)

Unpaid leave options:

- Leave of absence without pay (see **Administrative Instructions No. 1 and No. 17**)
- Family & Medical Leave: City employees on leave are required to use their vacation, sick leave, or other accrued leave (see **Administrative Instruction No. 33**)

INFECTION CONTROL & PREVENTION MEASURES

Safeguarding the health of City personnel, citizens, vendors, and others during an influenza pandemic is a key objective for the City of Bowling Green. A variety of infection control measures, including heightened hygiene practices, social distancing, and infection control equipment may be utilized to slow the spread of disease.

Hygiene: It is important for City employees to be educated and reminded of hygiene measures that help to limit the spread of disease. These include:

- Use of respiratory etiquette (e.g. covering cough or sneeze with a tissue or cloth).
- Proper cleansing of hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer regularly.
- Avoiding direct skin to skin contact with others, such as shaking hands. Substitute for hand-shaking with alternatives like waving, smiling, nodding, and bowing.
- Keep work areas and home clean and disinfected.
- Stay home when ill and do not send ill children to school or day care.

The following hygiene measures will be taken to reduce the spread of disease:

- Hand washing instructions will be posted in shared washrooms.
- Cover Your Cough reminders will be posted in break rooms and common areas.
- Magazines/papers will be removed from break rooms and common areas.

A supply of infection control products (e.g. hand-hygiene supplies, tissues) should be maintained.

- Hold a training session on recognizing flu symptoms, hygiene measures, what to do if you think you are sick, and how to keep your family healthy.
- Placement of hand washing and respiratory etiquette signs.

Social distancing: The City of Bowling Green has the ability to utilize the following social distancing strategies to reduce close contact among individuals:

Telecommuting: If mission appropriate, the use of telecommuting technologies may be approved on a departmental basis, as determined by the municipal administrator.

Face-to-face barriers: A number of employees have regular face-to-face contact with the public that can provide services behind a barrier, by telephone, or other remote method. Services that can be reorganized to be provided to the public without face-to-face contact should be identified by department heads. Other infection control strategies can be used to reduce the spread of disease between employees who must have face-to-face contact with others.

Restrict Workplace Entry of Persons Exhibiting Influenza Symptoms: During an influenza pandemic an effective way to limit the spread of disease is to ask infected individuals to remain home. Individuals exhibiting influenza symptoms will be barred from the workplace in order to insulate employees from the virus.

1. All employees will be notified that they should not come to work if they are unwell, particularly if they are exhibiting any influenza symptoms.
2. Notices will be posted at all workplace/facility entry points advising staff and visitors not to enter if they have influenza symptoms.
3. Measures must be taken to ensure that ill employees have completely recovered and are healthy and no longer infectious before allowing them to return to work. Note that staff members who have recovered from pandemic influenza are less likely to be re-infected and should be encouraged to return to work.

Infection control supplies and personal protective equipment: Increased use of infection control supplies may be advisable for personal protection during an influenza pandemic. The following infection control supplies and personal protective equipment are regularly available and may be needed by employees during a pandemic:

- Soap within bathrooms
- Soap within break rooms/kitchen areas
- Hand sanitizer (min. 60% alcohol content)
- Paper towels
- Facial tissues
- Garbage bags and trash cans
- Office cleaning supplies (details below)

Personal protective equipment

- Gloves
- Surgical masks
- N95 masks
- Other Respirators

Workplace cleaning: During a pandemic thorough workplace cleaning measures will be required to minimize the transmission of influenza virus through hard surfaces (e.g. door knobs, sinks, handles, railings, objects, and counters). The influenza viruses may live up to two days on such surfaces. When a person with suspected influenza is identified and has left the workplace, it is important that their work area, along with any other known places they have been, are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Cleaning is the removal of visible dirt or soil. It is usually accomplished by physical scrubbing using detergent and water. To disinfect, use any of the disinfectants listed in the table below and follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Influenza viruses are inactivated by many EPA approved disinfectants including alcohol and chlorine. Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned and disinfected often, preferably daily. Clean the surface to remove dirt and soil with a cleaning agent and disinfect following manufacturers recommendations (see below). The person cleaning and disinfecting should wear a mask and gloves and should discard them afterwards. Hands must be washed or sanitized at the completion of the procedure.

- **Disinfectants Recommended use Precautions**

Sodium Hypochlorite

1 part bleach to 100 parts of water, or 1:100 dilution

Usually achieved by ¼ cup bleach for 1½ gallons water

- Disinfection
- Should be used in well-ventilated areas.
- Utilize gloves while handling and using bleach solution.
- Do not mix with strong acids to avoid release of chlorine gas.
- Corrosive to metals and certain materials.

Alcohol (e.g. Isopropyl 70%, ethyl alcohol 60%)

- Disinfection
- Smooth metal surfaces, tabletops and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used
- Flammable and toxic
- To be used in well ventilated areas
- Avoid inhalation.
- Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment, flames, and hot surfaces
- Allow it to dry completely

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The City of Bowling Green will provide ongoing information and guidance to its personnel. Important communications include:

Pre-pandemic

- General avian/pandemic influenza information
- Disaster service worker obligations
- Infection control preparations
- How to develop a personal/family disaster kit
- Where to get information during an emergency (e.g. website, telephone information line)

Pandemic

- Updates on the status of the pandemic
- Policy changes
- Infection measures to be utilized at work
- Illness reporting
- Job reassignments
- Vendor product/supply needs
- Services available to the public

Pandemic Recovery

- Updates on the status of the pandemic
- Job reassignments
- Policy changes

Information will be disseminated to audiences throughout each stage using the modes of communication described below. Multiple strategies will be used to create redundancy and ensure that personnel and the public receive messages.

- **Telephone Systems:** Mass voice mail message, call center/phone bank, call-down tree
- **Electronic Systems:** Mass e-mail message, website posting
- **Hard copy:** Mailing, interoffice mail, mass faxes, notice board postings, pay check mailing
- **In person:** Meeting, presentation, in-service/training
- **Media- TV, Radio, Newspaper:** Press releases, press conferences

