



Pandemic Response

Are you ready?

Employers must balance a variety of objectives when determining how best to decrease the spread of influenza and lower the impact of influenza in the workplace.

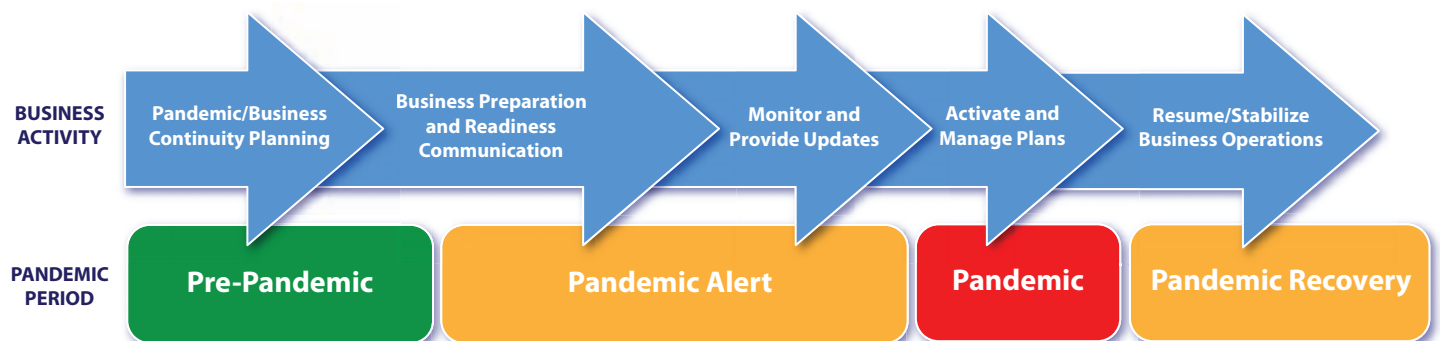
They should consider and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following:

- Reducing transmission among staff
- Protecting people who are at increased risk of influenza-related complications from getting infected with influenza
- Maintaining business operations
- Minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains

- Extent of disease (number of people who are sick) in the community
- Amount of worker absenteeism in your business or organization
- Impact of disease on workforce populations that are vulnerable and at higher risk (e.g., pregnant women, employees with certain chronic medical conditions)
- Other factors that may affect employees' ability to get to work, such as school dismissals or closures due to high levels of illness in children or school dismissals

Employers should base their strategies and response to influenza outbreaks on alerts provided by regional health authorities. Some of the key indicators that should be used when making decisions on appropriate responses are:

- Disease severity (i.e., hospitalization and death rates) in the community where business is located



Pacific Blue Cross provides the following checklist to help assess your workplace, develop and activate your organization's pandemic response strategies and procedures.

Employee Health and Safety

- Educate employees
 - Provide ways to prevent the spread of flu through clean workstations and critical hygiene
 - Discuss social distancing and limiting unnecessary group meetings
 - Publicize procedures for employees to follow if they get the flu, show symptoms or have ill family members (i.e., seek medical attention, avoid workplace, notify supervisor)
 - Announce any plans and procedures that will be available for support and assistance to employees and their families
 - Make known any active health screening that may be implemented to monitor employee and visitor health plus the conditions necessary for implementation
 - Distribute and display flu related posters and signage
- Make sanitation liquids available at entry points and common areas
- Reassess impact of limiting building access to visitors and non-essential workers
- Evaluate possible travel restrictions

Business Operations

- Confirm lists of essential functions that must be kept operational as well as non-critical functions that may be suspended
- Review critical jobs/responsibilities and identify who performs/owns them.
 - Provide cross-training for key roles to ensure critical operations are maintained
 - Confirm alternate personnel for business responsibilities and decision-making roles

- Review dependencies on critical business partners
 - Confirm capabilities of any critical business suppliers/vendors
 - Identify alternate sources for essential resources and services
- Assess employees' capability to work from home
 - Determine resource requirements (e.g. hardware, software)
 - Assess remote connectivity
 - Identify security risks and issues
- Confirm operational, communications and help desk staffing requirements needed to support essential business functions
- Review material and supplies necessary to sustain operations

Crisis Management

- Stay informed with government and health organizations' advisories to monitor the progression of the flu threat on a frequent basis
- Provide communications to internal and external audiences
 - Discuss plans to ensure economic and operational stability
 - Provide sources of information where people can learn more about pandemic flu
 - Promote a healthy workplace and ways to reduce the risk of catching the flu
 - Ensure messages are timely, relevant, accurate and culturally-sensitive
- Review succession plans for executive and senior management
- Review procedures for staff support groups

www.pac.bluecross.ca/pandemic