

Key Elements of Departmental Pandemic Influenza Operational Plans

The *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan* requires Federal departments and agencies to develop operational plans addressing (1) protection of employees, (2) maintenance of essential functions and services, (3) support for the Federal response, and (4) communication with stakeholders about pandemic planning and response. The checklist below is a mechanism to assist departments and agencies in developing their operational plans – it is for internal department and agency use only, and is not intended to serve as a reporting mechanism to any third party.

General Instructions: Departments and agencies should address all applicable elements of pandemic planning set forth in the checklist below. Each planning element question is complemented with a *Comments* and *Supporting Documents* field. (The Comments and Supporting Documents fields are for internal use and are not intended to be used for reporting purposes.)

Department and Agency Certification: In order to ensure uniform preparedness across the U.S. Government, the Homeland Security Council (HSC) has requested that all Department or Agency heads certify in writing to HSC, by **December 15, 2006**, that his or her Department or Agency is addressing the applicable elements of pandemic planning set forth in the final checklist below.

Planning and Preparedness Elements in this Document: The planning elements listed within the *Key Elements of Departmental Pandemic Influenza Operational Plans* are actions agencies should implement and synchronize with the Stages of the Federal Government Response to a pandemic.¹ The Federal Government recommends that government entities and the private sector plan with the assumption that up to 40% of their staff may be absent for periods of about 2 weeks at the height of a pandemic wave with lower levels of staff absent for a few weeks on either side of the peak; for pandemic planning purposes, essential services and functions² may be broader than 30-day Continuity of Operations (COOP) essential services and functions. In addition, consider that essential functions may be performed by Federal agency employees or contractors.

The Ongoing Nature of Planning and Preparedness: As preparedness efforts mature, and new challenges are identified and addressed, more Federal guidance will be released. Pandemic Planning is not a static process, as a result, all Departments and Agencies are encouraged to monitor the central web based repository for all Federal guidance at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/federal/index.html> and to revise their own plans and procedures accordingly.

¹ The Federal Government Response Stages are available in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/pandemicflu/>.

² Federal Preparedness Circular – 65 defines **essential functions** as those functions that enable an organization to: provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain the safety of the general public, and sustain the industrial or economic base during an emergency.

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
A. Plans and Procedures			
A.1	Has the agency designated a member of its leadership to coordinate its pandemic planning? Has the agency communicated this appointment to its components?		
A.2	Has the agency identified a structure to support the person charged with executing the agency's pandemic plan? The Pandemic Team should include representatives of relevant internal stakeholders (e.g. Management, Information Technology, Human Capital, Communications, Operating Units, etc.).		
A.3	Does the agency's plan include measures that are designed to minimize the health, social and economic impacts of a pandemic by:		
A.3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting employees' health and safety at work during a pandemic? 		
A.3b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating guidance to stakeholders prior to and during a pandemic? 		
A.3c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complying with the National Response Plan (NRP) and National Incident Management System? (NIMS)? 		
A.4	As part of its pandemic influenza planning and preparations, is the agency: ³		

³ For guidance related to A4, please see Preparing the Workplace for Everyone: Accounting for the Needs of People with Disabilities (Appendix A, page 60), available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/emergency.htm>.

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
A.4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for the needs of employees and stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities? 		
A.4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving a cross section of individuals, including individuals with disabilities, in aspects of emergency preparedness? 		
A.4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making plans and subsequent communications accessible to and usable by all employees and stakeholders, including those with disabilities? 		
A5	Has the agency aligned its plan and implementation of the plan (e.g., altering operations, flexible work schedules, social distancing, telework, shutting down operations in affected areas, etc.) to the Federal Government Response Stages? ⁴		
A6	Has the agency (through the Federal Executive Board, where applicable) ensured that its plans accommodate local response plans by: ⁵		
A.6a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for likely employee absenteeism for those who must mind school age children due to potential school closures? 		
A6b.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for likely employee absenteeism for those who must provide care for the ill? 		

⁴ The Federal Government Response Stages are available in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/pandemicflu/>.

⁵ Communities across the nation are planning for a potential pandemic; community policies may impact the operations of government entities in their jurisdiction. Twenty eight Federal Executive Boards in major centers of Federal activity (Albuquerque-Santa Fe, Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas-Fort Worth, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Newark, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, St. Louis, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Seattle) provide a useful mechanism for coordinating Federal activities with those of the community. (More information available at: <http://www.feb.gov/>).

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
B. Essential Functions			
B.1	Does the agency's plan include definitions and identification of essential services and functions needed to sustain agency mission and operations? ⁶		
B.2	Does the agency's plan include determination of which, if any, essential services and functions, or non-essential operational support functions can be suspended temporarily and for what duration before adversely impacting agency mission (e.g. up to 40 percent absenteeism for two weeks during the peak of a pandemic, and lower levels of absenteeism for a few weeks on either side of the peak)?		
B.3	Does the agency's plan address its incident management roles as identified in the National Response Plan?		
B.4	Has the agency planned to sustain essential services and functions during a pandemic influenza outbreak, under the following scenarios:		
B.4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce reductions (up to 40 percent absenteeism for two weeks during the peak of a pandemic, and lower levels of absenteeism for a few weeks on either side of the peak)? 		
B.4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to facilities (e.g., either because of social distancing, staffing or security concerns or other external factors)? 		
B.4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad-based implementation of social distancing policies?⁷ 		

⁶ The Federal Government recommends that government entities and the private sector plan with the assumption that up to 40% of their staff may be absent for periods of about 2 weeks at the height of a pandemic wave with lower levels of staff absent for a few weeks on either side of the peak; for pandemic planning purposes, essential services and functions may be broader than 30-day COOP essential services and functions.

⁷ See also A6, above.

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
B.5	Has the agency identified positions, skills and personnel needed to continue essential services and functions? (For pandemic purposes, essential personnel may include a larger percentage of the agency workforce than identified in COOP planning.)		
B.6	Has the agency developed a plan to ensure and consider:		
B.6a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate level of staffing (Federal and contract support) to continue essential functions? 		
B.6b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of planning with contractors, suppliers, shippers, federal agencies and other businesses that support, or are supported by, your essential functions? (See also H.1e) 		
B.7	As appropriate, has the agency initiated pre-solicited, signed and standing agreements with contractors and other third parties to ensure fulfillment of mission essential requirements, including contingencies for backup should primary suppliers or contractors be unable to provide required personnel, services or supplies?		
B.8	Has the agency identified and trained approximately two to three back-up personnel to continue essential services and functions, including back-up personnel in different geographic locations, as appropriate? ⁸		
B.9	Has the agency established a roster of personnel and back-up personnel, by position, needed to continue essential services and functions?		

⁸ An alternative that achieves the same ends: ensure each staff member's familiarity with the roles and responsibilities of 2 additional and related positions, creating in effect a reverse 1 to 3 ratio.

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
C. Devolution of Control and Direction/ Delegations of Authority			
C.1	As appropriate, has the agency developed and incorporated detailed guidance for possible full or partial devolution of command and control responsibilities as a strategy to conduct and provide essential services during a pandemic should the outbreak render leaders and essential staff incapable or unavailable to perform their defined functions?		
C.2	Has the agency established delegations of authority to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism?		
D. Orders of Succession			
D.1	Has the agency established orders of succession that are at least three deep per responsibility and geographically dispersed, as appropriate, to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism?		
E. Primary and Alternate Operating Facilities			
E.1	Has your agency developed and implemented a plan to identify adequate alternate worksites (e.g., home or other adequate alternate worksites that maintain social distancing measures), as appropriate, to assure capability to maintain essential services for up to several months during a pandemic? (See also Telework H5b.) ⁹		
E.2	Has the agency identified which essential services and functions can be continued from designated operating facilities or alternative operating facilities (e.g., home or other adequate alternate worksites) and those that need to be performed at a designated department or agency operating facility? (A designated operating facility is an existing agency facility that may remain open during a pandemic with appropriate social distancing for staff that cannot perform their functions remotely and are needed to support the continuation of essential services and functions.)		

⁹ The Federal Government recommends that government entities and the private sector plan with the assumption that up to 40% of their staff may be absent for periods of about 2 weeks at the height of a pandemic wave with lower levels of staff absent for a few weeks on either side of the peak; for pandemic planning purposes, essential services and functions may be broader than 30-day COOP essential function.

	Planning Element:	Comments	
E.3	Has the agency assessed the need for establishing redundant or back-up sources, as appropriate, for essential resources (such as food, water, fuel, medical facilities, electrical utilities, information technology support, communications and municipal services) at designated operating facilities and/or alternative worksites?		
F. Communications			
F.1	Has the agency developed and implemented mechanisms to communicate relevant information to internal and external stakeholders, including:		
F.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for determining the status of agency operations and possible changes in working conditions? 		
F.1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative means of communication in case normal communications are disrupted? 		
F.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish points of contact for accurate and up-to-date information during a pandemic (e.g., Point-of contacts from Department of Homeland Security [DHS] and Department of Health and Human Services [HHS])? 		
F.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and health information for employees? (For contents see Section H.6) 		
F.1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of links to http://www.pandemicflu.gov for pandemic flu related information (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission, developing individual and family plans) from internal and public websites? 		
F.1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for how directive actions from the Secretary or head of the agency will be disseminated to components? 		
F.2	Has the agency developed a communication plan that ensures communications are accessible to individuals (both within and outside the continental United States) with:		
F.2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited English proficiency, consistent with Executive Order 13166? 		

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
F.2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision or hearing disabilities? 		
G. Vital Records and Databases			
G.1	Has the agency identified and developed plans to ensure access to vital records needed to sustain operations ¹⁰ that may be inaccessible remotely from alternative worksites by:		
G.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the confidentiality of, and limiting the disclosure of, employees' medical information consistent with the Rehabilitation Act, the Privacy Act and the Health Insurance and Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA)? 		
G.1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing security protocols for all systems, databases and files that will need to be accessed electronically from a remote location (e.g., an employee's home or alternative workplaces)? 		
G.2	Has the agency identified and ensured the integrity and continued usability of vital systems that require periodic maintenance or other direct physical intervention by employees?		
H: Human Capital			
H.1 General Human Capital			
H.1a	Has the agency reviewed and incorporated Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Human Capital Planning guidance for a Pandemic Influenza (www.opm.gov/pandemic/) in its pandemic influenza planning to provide workplace flexibility, including telework, during a pandemic?		

¹⁰ The Federal Government recommends that government entities and the private sector plan with the assumption that up to 40% of their staff may be absent for periods of about 2 weeks at the height of a pandemic wave with lower levels of staff absent for a few weeks on either side of the peak; for pandemic planning purposes, essential services and functions may be broader than 30-day COOP essential function.

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
H.1b	Has the agency created and implemented workforce guidelines to prevent or minimize workplace exposure to contagious disease? The guidelines must be consistent with federal equal employment opportunity laws (i.e., disability, age and pregnancy).		
H.1c	Has the agency identified and/or developed alternative work arrangements (e.g., job sharing, flexible work schedules) available for use in the case of a pandemic health crisis?		
H.1d	Has the agency developed a process consistent with the OPM guidance to collect and report the status of its employees during a pandemic health crisis for the purpose of monitoring agency workforce levels and reporting such information to OPM?		
H.1e	Has the agency discussed the effect of pandemic related human capital issues with its procurement and contract workforce (including contract workers who are co-located with or routinely work at the same worksite as Federal employees, as well as those who are not co-located with Federal employees)?		
H.2	Employee-Labor Relations:		
H.2a	Has the agency consulted and bargained (as appropriate) with exclusive representatives of bargaining unit employees over human resources issues that may affect employees or collective bargaining agreements (e.g., telework during a pandemic health crisis and assignment of work during a pandemic health crisis)?		
H.2b	Has the agency developed a plan for identifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement or other labor-management agreement that may need to be addressed to enable the agency to carry out its mission in the event of a pandemic-related emergency?		

	Planning Element:	Comments	
H.2c	Has the agency developed a plan for communicating with exclusive representatives at the national and/or local level regarding any determination that will affect compliance with specific terms of a collective bargaining agreement during an emergency?		
H.2d	Has the agency developed a plan for determining what, if any, post-implementation bargaining may be necessary as the result of management actions taken during an emergency?		
H.3	Pay and Leave Policy:		
H.3a	Has the agency reviewed and revised, as necessary, agency policy and/or guidance on leave, alternative work schedules (i.e., flexible and compressed work schedules), and evacuation payments?		
H.3b	For the purpose of administering evacuation payments, has the agency identified appropriate work assignments for employees whose homes may be designated as their “safe haven” during a pandemic health crisis? (‘Safe haven’ means a designated area to which an employee or dependent will be or has been evacuated. 5 CFR 550.402)		
H.3c	Has the agency ensured its managers and supervisors are familiar with various leave options for seeking medical attention, the procedures and obligations for requesting and approving leave, and the limited circumstances under which an employee may be directed to take leave?		
H.3d	Has the agency prepared for requesting “buyout” repayment and dual compensation waivers (salary offset waivers for returning annuitants), if needed?		
H.3e	Has the agency assessed all agency policy, guidance, and/or requirements regarding leave, alternative work schedules, and evacuation payments for compliance with Federal equal employment opportunity laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, age, and pregnancy, among others?		

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
H.4	Hiring Policies:		
H.4a	Has the agency educated its hiring officials on existing Government-wide and agency-specific hiring authorities, including emergency authorities?		
H.4b	Has the agency identified specific hiring needs (e.g., critical positions, geographic locations) and determined which hiring flexibilities the agency may need to utilize that (1) do not require OPM approval, and (2) require OPM approval?		
H.4c	For hiring needs requiring OPM approval, have agency officials developed documentation and/or compiled information that can be used to immediately request approval in the event of a pandemic health crisis?		
H.5a	Has the agency developed a plan to ensure telework capability and alternative workplace access for appropriate staff, including personnel supporting essential services and functions?		
H.5b	Has the agency reviewed and revised for all operations, telework policies and procedures, incorporating latest OPM guidance, as appropriate, including security, infrastructure, user communications, and operations and maintenance?		
H.5c	Has the agency assessed and prioritized current telework capability, such as the number of employees that can be telework enabled, to support essential functions and other operations in terms of equipment and telecommunications (i.e., laptops, pre-loaded software, broadband, fax machines, conference call capability, printers, network/remote access capability, help desk support, etc.)?		
H.5d	Has the agency identified an agency telework coordinator and disseminated contact information agency-wide?		

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
H.5e	Has the agency determined which employees are eligible to telework and offered telework arrangements to all eligible telework employees?		
H.5f	Has the agency arranged to provide technology support sufficient to meet telework needs during a pandemic?		
H.5g	Has the agency ensured its telecommunications infrastructure is capable of handling telework arrangements and securing sensitive information?		
H.5h	Has the agency developed and implemented telework agreements, and filed such agreements with the telework coordinator?		
H.5i	Has the agency assessed all telework policies, guidelines, and requirements for compliance with Federal equal employment opportunity laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, age, or pregnancy, among others?		
H.6	Safety and Health for Employees and their Families¹¹		
H.6a	Based on public health guidance, such as issued by CDC, has the agency established policies for restricting travel to geographic areas affected by a pandemic health crisis and monitoring employees returning from affected areas? ¹²		

¹¹ Planning guidance for employees whose medical conditions place them at greater risk of complications due to infection with pandemic influenza is forthcoming. (Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies specific medical conditions that may place individuals at greater risk of complications due to infection with pandemic influenza). Such planning must account for a variety of considerations and be compliant with Federal equal employment opportunity laws where applicable.

¹² See CDC travel information related to avian influenza, including preventive measures, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>. Also, general country information can be obtained from the Department of State's Consular Information Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov> and Embassy and Consulate Websites at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html.

	Planning Element:	Comments	
H.6b	Based on HHS and OPM guidance, has the agency established leave policies that address employees who become ill or are suspected of becoming ill while at their normal work site? The policies must be compliant with Federal equal employment opportunity laws, where applicable.		
H.6c	Based on OPM and HHS guidance, has the agency established policies for returning previously ill, non-infectious, employees to work? The policies must be compliant with Federal equal employment opportunity laws, where applicable.		
H.6d	Based on OPM, HHS and Department of Labor (DOL) guidance, has the agency established social distancing policies for preventing pandemic influenza spread at work? The policies must be compliant with Federal equal employment opportunity laws, where applicable.		
H.6e	Based on public health guidance has the agency disseminated and posted educational and training materials to raise awareness about pandemic and workplace related policies (i.e., cough etiquette, hand hygiene, and social distancing strategies)?		
H.6f	Has the agency's safety and health personnel performed and regularly updated risk assessments based on occupational exposures and objective medical evidence and procured appropriate types and quantities of infection control-related supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizers, surface wipes, cleansers, and tissues)?		
H.6g	Has the agency identified qualified safety and health personnel to ensure infection control measures are identified and implemented, including (if applicable) the appropriate selection and use of personal protective equipment, based on HHS and DOL guidance?		

	Planning Element:	Comments	Supporting Documents
H.6h	Based on guidance issued by HHS/CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency, has the agency disseminated to contractors and cleaning crews information on routine cleaning practices and environmental management strategies that can be used during influenza seasons as well as during an influenza pandemic?		
H.6i	Has the agency's Pandemic Coordinator been designated as a Point-of Contact for vaccine and anti-viral prioritization information and distribution before and during a pandemic? (Recommendations for the use of vaccines and antivirals before and during a pandemic will depend on the nature of the pandemic—while general guidelines are now under development, final decisions on prioritization and distribution will not be made until a pandemic occurs.)		
H.6j	Has the agency reviewed and updated where necessary service contracts with healthcare providers to administer pandemic flu vaccinations (when available), antiviral and supportive medications, or perform other health service related duties?		
H.6k	Has the agency reviewed its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other resources available to employees to ensure they are equipped to prepare and respond to the psychological and social needs of employees prior to, during, and after a pandemic health crisis (e.g., survivor assistance programs)?		
I. Test, Training and Exercise			
I.1	Has the agency conducted pandemic influenza-related exercises (involving essential personnel, managers, senior leadership, and contract support) to examine the impact of a pandemic on agency's ability to carry out essential functions?		
I.2	Has the agency developed processes to evaluate program plans, procedures, and capabilities through periodic reviews, testing, post-incident reports, lessons learned, performance evaluations and exercises?		

	Planning Element:	Comments	
I.3	Has the agency developed processes to ensure that corrective action is taken on any deficiency identified in the evaluation process and to revise at a minimum the relevant policy(ies), guidance, personnel, procedures, training, equipage, facilities, as well as plan(s)?		
K. Reconstitution			
J.1	Does your agency have processes to assess the sufficiency of resources to commence reconstitution efforts?		
J.2	Does your agency have a process for calling up former Federal employees to ensure that mission essential functions are fulfilled?		