**PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN (sample)**

“Our values include a commitment to empowerment with accountability that results in teamwork and efficiency.”

**[Enter Employer Name] Statement**

**Overview**

Experts believe that a pandemic will strike in the near future. Absenteeism, a shortage of supplies and utilities overload, are only a few of the concerns. Therefore, the following information has been compiled to assist employees in pandemic flu preparedness procedures.

**General Policy Statement**

[Enter Employer Name] is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy environment for all its employees and visitors. In an effort to support public health officials in preventing the spread of contagious disease, [Ener Employer Name} has developed policies to help prevent and respond to a pandemic. As a general rule, the prevention policy will be enforced and as a situation warrants, the response policy will go into effect.

[Enter Employer Name] will work with local public health officials in its various markets in order to stay informed and monitor the need to respond to potential and/or real outbreaks.

This Plan will be shared with local public health officials, hospitals and local clinics in each area of operation. A copy will also be sent to the health insurance provider, employee assistance program provider and liability insurance carrier. During the annual meeting to review coverage provided by the various plans, the Pandemic Prevention and Response Plan will also be reviewed in order to ensure appropriate levels of coverage are included in the plan designs. Necessary changes in coverage will be discussed and considered as needed.

**Stopping the Spread of Germs at Work**

**How Germs Spread**

Illnesses such as influenza (the flu) and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

**How to Help Stop the Spread of Germs**

1. *Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.*

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve if tissues are unavailable. Wash your hands every time you cough or sneeze.

1. **Clean your hands often.**

When available, wash your hands with soap and warm water, then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all skin surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu. Keep antibacterial gel at your desk and in your purse or briefcase. Antibacterial gel will be provided for employees to use in all conference and break rooms.

1. **Clean equipment often.**

Sanitizing wipes have been provided in several areas throughout the office where common use of equipment occurs; i.e., the conference room, mailroom, reception area. Telephones, keyboards and other equipment should be wiped down prior to individual use.

1. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for two hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

1. **Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed. Remember: keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include:

* Fever (usually high)
* Headache
* Extreme tiredness
* Cough
* Sore throat
* Runny or stuffy nose
* Muscle aches
* Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

1. **Practice other good health habits.**

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during the flu season and all year long.

1. **Get a flu shot.**

Employees are reminded that the company sponsors annual influenza vaccinations during the fall. The company also provides paid time off (vacation/sick leave) to cover absences due to influenza.

1. **Masks**

When contact is unavoidable and it becomes necessary to wear a mask

\*With limitations based on access to company IT system

Requirements for telecommuting: Employee must be in a position that does not involve direct customer contact. Employees whose positions rely on direct customer contact may be allowed to telecommute with written permission from their immediate supervisor, if the property or department is adequately staffed and/or the Pandemic Threat Level is at 6 (as defined by the World Health Organization).

Employee must have internet access from home and either a home computer or company laptop. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. [Enter Employer Name] will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home office such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. Employees will be offered appropriate assistance in setting up a workstation designed for safe, comfortable work. [Enter Employer Name} will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) for successful completion of job responsibilities and will also reimburse the employee for all other business-related expenses such as phone calls, shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities. Reimbursement for these expenses will be through the established expense reimbursement procedure.

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by [Enter Employer Name]. Telecommuting employees will be held to a higher standard of compliance than office-based employees due to the nature of the work arrangement. Hours worked in excess of those specified per day and per work week, in accordance with state and federal requirements will require the advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the telecommuting agreement.

When the threat of infection is gone and telecommuting employees return to the workplace, they will return all company property including computers, fax machines, pens, paper and miscellaneous office supplies that were provided to them.

**Transportation Issues**

There are a number of different possible scenarios with regards to public transportation and employees commuting to and from work during a pandemic. First, it is very likely that public transportation services may be disrupted during a pandemic due to transit staffing issues. The transit authorities will have the same potential issues with staff shortages as all other employers. In addition, there is the possibility that public transportation may be stopped completely as a community containment measure. At the same time, it is predicted that transit use will drop significantly due to commuters’ unwillingness to use public transportation as a result of a public health advisory to limit person-to-person contact. Regardless of the reason employees who use public transportation will need to consider developing contingency plans to deal with these situations.

If you rely on public transportation but have the ability to telecommute, we recommend that option first. However, telecommuting is not always possible. Should you choose to continue to use public transportation, we recommend that employees wear gloves and masks during their commute. [Enter Employer Name] will provide these items to any employee requesting them. In order to assist in decreasing the amount of person-to-person contact during your commute, we will work with employees to establish staggered working hours or flexible hours so employees are not using public transportation during high volume times. Although this will not always be feasible, we will do our best to accommodate as many employees as possible.

If disruptions in public transportation occur and/or employees are hesitant to use public transportation, we recommend driving yourself to work or carpooling with other employees under these circumstances. We will provide a means by which employees can connect with others employees in the same situation. A Sign-Up Sheet will be located at each location designating employees who are willing to drive and others who are in need of transportation.

We will identify employees who are having transportation issues and are critical to our operations. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

Management Preparedness Checklist

1. Verify the Emergency Phone Listing is current with cellular numbers and home numbers of all employees, including the regional director’s numbers. Include a contact person for staff and a central number for all employees to contact. Upon completion, distribute to all employees and forward a copy to the regional director and corporate office. The corporate office will compile an Emergency Reaction Team to assist properties in need after the company is affected by the pandemic.
2. Verify that the properties’ and the corporate office emergency equipment are in good working order and supplies are adequate to last several days if necessary. Office emergency equipment is to include batteries, flashlights, and battery- powered radios.
3. Ensure emergency relief supplies are available and easily assessable. Supplies are to include first aid kits, blankets, can openers, batteries, canned food, bandages, plastic bags, unscented bleach, drinking cups, bottled water and other supplies as recommended by local public health officials or the CDC.
4. Request replenishment of any outstanding petty cash.
5. Should the office be required to close, call all move-ins and move-outs to make the necessary arrangements.
6. Contact the local Red Cross Chapter to verify the phone numbers and inquire as to where the closest hospitals are located.
7. Send notification to clients.

* Develop a Pandemic Flu Preparedness Letter.

1. Open and remove any gate arms in anticipation of power outage.
2. Know where the authorities will allow waste disposal until pick up is available. Separate types of waste. Food products must be bagged and separate from all waste materials.
3. Give answering services the manager’s and maintenance supervisor’s home and cell phone numbers.
4. Locate a local radio station with the appropriate news network system on a battery-powered radio. Stay informed of where outbreaks are occurring and listen for instructions for your area.
5. In the event the property model units are required for habitation, stock the units with the following: bedroom and bathroom linens, toilet paper and tissues, blankets, bottled water, unscented bleach, can opener, canned food, bandages, first aid kit, plastic bags, drinking cups, paper napkins and plates, plastic utensils and batteries.
6. Ensure emergency relief supplies are available and easily assessable. Supplies are to include first aid kits, antibacterial hand gel, blankets, can openers, batteries, canned food, bandages, plastic bags, unscented bleach, drinking cups, and bottled water.

Management Responsibilities after the Pandemic

1. Contact the regional director and corporate management resource with the status our facilities and employee.
2. Assist government health agencies with records and information, if applicable.
3. Make the office as easily accessible as possible when requesting assistance.
4. If possible, have a designated area available for employees or government health agencies.

Emergency Contact List and phone numbers