



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Municipal Planning Guide for Pandemic Influenza

In Newfoundland and Labrador

2009

PREFACE

This document is designed to assist local governments in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to increase their level of pandemic influenza preparedness. It is also intended to facilitate coordinated participation among the Municipalities or Local Service Districts, Fire and Emergency Services - Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, the Department of Health and Community Services, the local Regional Health Authority and other community stakeholders on emergency planning for a pandemic influenza outbreak. Unlike other hazards a pandemic represents unique challenges that may not be addressed in other aspects of the community's emergency plan.

Pandemic influenza is an identified hazard and due to the potential for an extreme impact, municipalities are encouraged to prepare. Although this guide may not provide all the answers, it raises key issues and makes suggestions for dealing with them. It is intended to be flexible, allowing for differences among communities and their regions and may also be used as a planning guide in response to outbreaks of other infectious diseases.

This guide has been prepared through the collaborative efforts of Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment, the Department of Health and Community Services and the Regional Health Authorities. It incorporates best planning practices from the Newfoundland and Labrador document *Pandemic Influenza: Planning Guidelines, Roles and Responsibilities for the Health Sector*; the *Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Health Sector*; and documents from other jurisdictions including the Governments of Manitoba and New Brunswick.



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INTRODUCTION

Influenza is an acute viral disease of the respiratory tract that occurs every year in the population. It is estimated that 4,000 Canadians die each year from influenza and its complications.

At regular intervals, but usually two or three times per century, a new influenza virus appears causing a worldwide epidemic or “pandemic”. The 1918 “Spanish Flu” is believed to have caused over 20 million deaths world wide. Experts predict that the next influenza pandemic may include high rates of death and illness resulting in tremendous demands on the health system and causing pervasive social disruption.

Over the past several years, we have become more aware of the likely eventuality of a pandemic and its potential impact on public health, the economy, and the ability of all communities to maintain essential services. Assuming a moderate influenza pandemic with an illness rate of 35%, it is estimated that in Newfoundland and Labrador, 3347 people will require hospitalization, 836 people will die and thousands more will be seeking medical assistance. This attack rate will mean at least one third of municipal staff may be unavailable for work over the course of the pandemic and some may die. Employers within each municipality will also have to deal with high rates of absenteeism that could have significant impact on the socio economic state of the community.

An influenza pandemic affects much more than just the health care system. It is a crisis that affects all aspects of society. It must be managed by the coordinated participation and cooperation of governments, businesses, other organizations and citizens. Because it is a community hazard, each municipal government is responsible for taking the lead in preparing their community to respond to, and recover from, this type of emergency.

Comprehensive early planning will reduce the effects of a pandemic on society. It may be too late to take any of the actions that can mitigate the impact of a pandemic if preparation is delayed until it arrives. Governments, other organizations and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador, like elsewhere around the world, are preparing to respond. Each local government and community must determine how best to prepare for and manage a pandemic emergency in their area.



UNDERSTAND THE HAZARD AND ITS EFFECTS

When developing a contingency plan it is useful to apply a plausible, worst-case scenario describing the nature of the event causing the emergency and the challenges that the community will face.

This section provides background information on an influenza pandemic and its potential impact. Apply this information to your community to create a scenario of what a pandemic would be like and the challenges and difficulties it may create in your community.

Understanding Influenza

The influenza A virus is the type involved in all known influenza pandemics. The virus can undergo major changes or shifts in makeup, producing a completely new strain such as the H1N1 Influenza A virus outbreak in 2009. Most people do not have immunity to these strains of influenza and large numbers of individuals will become infected.

For a new influenza virus to cause a pandemic, it must be able to:

- infect people (not just mammals and birds)
- cause illness in a high proportion of those infected
- spread easily from person to person

All previous influenza pandemics had these characteristics. Although no one knows exactly how the next pandemic will affect us, we can make a number of assumptions, based on previous pandemics and medical research.

Characteristics of Influenza

One of the key planning assumptions held by public health experts is that a pandemic influenza will behave somewhat like ordinary influenza.

Symptoms:

- Influenza symptoms include a sudden onset of: headache, fever, sore throat, muscle pain, general weakness, nasal congestion, dry cough, vomiting and diarrhea (usually in young children). Fever may be absent in the elderly.
- Once someone is infected with the influenza virus, it usually takes from one to three days to develop symptoms.



Influenza transmission:

- Influenza is highly contagious and spreads very quickly among the population, especially in crowded situations.
- The influenza virus enters the body through the eyes, nose or mouth by:
 - inhaling droplets produced by the coughing or sneezing of infected persons
 - touching the mouth, eyes or nose after:
 - hand-to-hand contact with infected individuals
 - touching surfaces or handling objects contaminated by infected individuals.

The disease typically follows these steps:

- Persons with influenza can be contagious from the day before they develop symptoms up to seven days afterwards (typically three to five days in healthy adults and up to seven days in children). This time frame may be longer in people with decreased immune systems.
- Not everybody who comes in contact with influenza virus will become ill; however they may still spread the infection to others.
- Flu symptoms can last four to seven days. A cough and general fatigue may persist for several weeks afterward.
- People can be infected and contagious before they become ill. This is why it is difficult to contain influenza.
- Some people who get influenza also develop secondary bacterial infections including pneumonia, which can result in prolonged illness or death.

Antivirals, Vaccines and Antibiotics

- It is unlikely that an effective vaccine will be available at the start of pandemic activity in Canada but it may be available for a second wave of illness.
- Because the population will have had no previous resistance to the pandemic strain, two doses of the vaccine may be necessary to achieve protection.
- Since influenza is not caused by bacteria, antibiotics will be of no value other than to help combat secondary infections, such as bacterial pneumonia.
- Public health staff will deliver the vaccine through mass immunization, once it is available.
- Vaccines are not 100% effective. Seasonal vaccines protect approximately 70% of healthy adults.
- Antiviral drugs may be useful for treatment if taken within 48 hours of the first symptoms.



Warning Period

Given the mobile nature of today's society, a disease can spread very rapidly. Disease surveillance and attempts to contain a pandemic may slow the spread of the disease but it is likely it will be impossible to contain it. We anticipate having some warning from the time a pandemic is declared by the World Health Organization to the time the virus arrives in Canada. This is based on the assumption that a pandemic will start elsewhere in the world and then spread to North America. It is possible that the warning period may be shorter.

When a pandemic does begin, the assumptions about the viral strain causing disease will need to be checked against latest available information. Plans can then be updated as necessary.

Duration

A pandemic may last up to two years and, based on previous pandemics, may occur in waves. Each wave could last six to eight weeks and be separated by three to nine months.

To learn more about influenza and pandemic, talk to your regional health authority or see www.fightflu.ca

Population Impact

During an influenza pandemic, much of the population will become ill and some will die. It is expected that there will be more illness and death during a pandemic than experienced during a regular influenza season. This may be made worse by decreased availability of health care during the pandemic.

Influenza typically has the greatest impact (complications, death) on the very young, the very old and those with suppressed immunity. However, pandemic influenza has affected different age groups in the past, including 20 to 40 year olds, as was the case during the 1918-1919 pandemic.

Public health experts assume that, during an influenza pandemic, 35 per cent of people will become ill enough to miss work. Of those who become ill, more than 0.4% could die.

Impact on Society

A pandemic is anticipated to affect many people throughout the world. In other types of emergencies, all levels of government as well as nongovernmental organizations can focus their personnel and resources on a small area. During a pandemic, demand for people and resources will likely be high across the province and outside support will be limited or unavailable. Losses from reduced productivity will be significant and will impact individuals, businesses, governments and other organizations.



Impact on Local Governments

The widespread nature of a pandemic is expected to have a significant impact on many aspects of society in Newfoundland and Labrador including local governments. Unlike most other disasters, where disruption to service provision is restricted by environmental or structural events; it is anticipated that, in the event of a pandemic, service disruption will be mainly human-resource oriented.

The two key areas impacted will be employee absenteeism and supply chain problems.

1) Employee Absenteeism

Some key municipal employees may become ill or even die during the pandemic, which means a significant loss of available personnel that have specific or unique knowledge and skills to enable your municipality to function.

A key consideration when planning for a response to a pandemic is to fully understand the roles and responsibilities of all employees. A thorough knowledge of the skills of all employees and other workers that the town may employ would be beneficial as staff may be required to do the work of others who are too ill to report to work. Your municipality should also be aware of the skills and capabilities of employees of nearby municipalities as collaboration may be necessary to deliver essential services to your areas during a pandemic. Cross training of employees for essential functions will be one of the best strategies to employ when considering a loss of people in essential roles.

2) Supply Chain Problems

Your local government operations depend on suppliers for services, materials, equipment, parts or supplies. During a pandemic, both local suppliers and those located in other areas are likely to experience operational, production and shipping difficulties. They too, may be dealing with loss of workforce, loss of their own suppliers and shipping difficulties from potential border closures or delays as countries try to contain the spread of the disease. The availability of services from sub-contractors may also be affected (this may affect maintenance of key equipment).

The demand for certain types of supplies may increase dramatically during a pandemic and may be very difficult to obtain quickly. Some supplies may not be available at all. Pandemic plans will need to identify and address potential issues related to a shortfall of essential supplies and services during a pandemic.

Impact on Other Local Governments

Other local governments will experience the same personnel and supply chain issues as yours. You may not be able to rely on mutual-aid agreements with neighboring



communities. However, pooling human resources and equipment for various critical services should still be considered.

Impacts on Other Levels of Government

Other levels of government will also experience personnel and supply chain problems. They may have business continuity plans for key departments and agencies to maintain basic services; however you should expect that service disruptions will occur.

Health Care

Along with addressing the challenges of an affected workforce, the health care system is expected to be overwhelmed by demand for urgent care. The Department of Health and Community Services and the Regional Health Authorities are developing plans and identifying resources to help manage these issues. Local governments may be requested to provide facilities, material and personnel to support health care operations. It is recommended that local governments collaborate with Regional Health Authorities and other local agencies to develop a comprehensive, coordinated response plan.

Schools

The decision to order school closures due to a pandemic influenza outbreak will be made after consideration of the current situation. If closures are necessary they will likely occur in the early stages of a pandemic.

Impact on Business and Economy

Employee absenteeism and supply chain issues may significantly affect productivity and the provision of services in your community. This may include increased or decreased demands for a service. Consider the following potential business issues during a pandemic:

- Businesses where large numbers of people congregate, such as transit systems, restaurants, some retail businesses, theatres, sporting venues and community centres, may be hit hard financially due to public fear;
- The provision of essential services like telecommunications/information, and financial services, energy supply, and logistics may be disrupted;
- Demand for some business services may increase (e.g. internet access); while demand for others may fall (e.g. travel and tourism activities);
- Some businesses that supply basic retail services, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, may not be able to operate or may run short of inventory due to production or shipping problems in other areas;
- Financial losses by many small and midsize businesses during a pandemic will exceed their capacity to recover. It is possible that businesses may fail, adding to the long-term economic impact on the community;



- Unemployment, caused by layoffs and business failures, may reduce the amount of cash flowing through the community with long-term ripple effects throughout the local economy; and
- Tax revenue at all levels may decrease while increased costs are incurred, associated with emergency preparations, response and recovery activities.



PLANNING TEAM

Stakeholder Participation

Development of a pandemic contingency plan should be a part of the all hazards municipal emergency plan. In the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador it is now mandatory for all Municipalities and Local Service Districts to have approved municipal emergency plans. If your municipality does not have an all hazards emergency plan, work should commence immediately on developing one. The pandemic component should be addressed during this process. If you are updating your plan, planning for the outbreak of a pandemic can be addressed similarly to any other hazard the municipality may encounter. In either case the first step is to form a planning team with a wide range of stakeholders from your community and surrounding region. Joint planning creates better working relationships. By sharing knowledge and ideas, understanding each others' roles, resources and limitations and coordinating plans, you can reduce overlap and duplication and ensure all emergency needs are addressed. Be sure to involve all stakeholders throughout the planning process. You will need their support during a pandemic.

Some individuals or groups you may wish to include in your joint planning group include:

Local Government

- Local government council
- Local government emergency preparedness coordinator
- Local government department managers

Regional

- Regional Health Authority (Regional Medical Officer of Health, Regional Health Emergency Management Coordinator)
- Local physicians and nurses
- Infection Control Practitioners, Infectious Disease Specialists
- Public Health Inspectors, Environmental Health Officers
- Occupational Health and Safety Officers
- School board, local teachers, child-care facility managers/owners
- Adjoining municipalities, local service districts, and/or Aboriginal communities
- Police
- Correctional facilities
- Child and family service agencies
- Port/Harbour Authority
- Special care and/or seniors homes



Provincial Government

- Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL)
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment

Business

- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Key businesses or major employers

Non-government Organizations

- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Church groups
- Local cultural, ethnic groups, service organizations

Roles and Responsibilities

Assign responsibility to administer and coordinate the development and maintenance of the local pandemic contingency plan. This is usually the responsibility of the community emergency coordinator, who manages other details of the community's emergency preparedness program. In order for effective and efficient planning, all stakeholders must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as those of others. It is important to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the planning process.

Individual participants and organizations also need to develop their own plans to ensure continuity of their own operations and to support the community's plan.

Stakeholder Planning

It is likely that some individuals or organizations on the planning team will not have any type of emergency planning experience. They will need some help getting started and also at various points in the planning process. Providing this guideline or associated business guidelines, identifying links to relevant government and non-government sources of emergency preparedness, and conducting regular meetings to share ideas, information and suggestions will help. Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador offers emergency management training that will be useful for your committee in completing this task.



PLAN OBJECTIVES

The first step in plan development is to identify the objectives of a municipal or community pandemic response plan. The following objectives should be included in the plan:

Ensuring Employee Protection

Take reasonable measures to reduce employee absenteeism by creating a workplace that reduces the risk of influenza exposure. Provide a caring, supportive work environment during this time of increased stress.

Maintaining Essential Services

Protect and maintain critical community services including police, fire, transportation, water and sewer services. The loss of these would make the effects of the pandemic on the community even worse.

Responding to the Needs of the Emergency

The local government will be required to coordinate its own response to the pandemic emergency. It may be called upon to support the emergency response efforts of the province, Regional Health Authorities and neighbouring communities. Support that may be requested of local governments could include:

- providing facilities for temporary health care services, immunization and isolation;
- providing security services to hospitals and clinics where vaccines and antiviral medications may require additional protection;
- providing information on the affected population and other local needs. Towns should maintain an up-to-date inventory of who is in the community, especially seniors, the young, people with special needs etc;
- maintaining an updated list of resources that could be used should a pandemic occur;
- assisting with emergency social support to members of the community, including non-medical care, transportation and monitoring the health status of the sick;
- supporting the respective authorities in the provision of services for the deceased;
- supporting Child Youth and Family Services with care of orphaned children; children in need of temporary care due to the illness or death of parents/guardians; or child care to help essential workers continue with their duties;
- sharing of information to responders on the local needs of the community; and
- providing advice or help to keep key businesses operating.



Managing Financial Issues

The local government will need to manage the financial costs and economic impact of an emergency. This may include:

- tracking preparation, response and recovery costs for reimbursement of eligible costs, if financial assistance becomes available;
- taking action to protect the local economy; and
- dealing with potential reduced revenue and increased expenditures.

Helping with Recovery

Local authorities are also responsible for coordinating recovery plans and programs, between waves of a pandemic and after the pandemic is over. Recovery plans will require addressing economic, organizational and psychosocial supports to assist in returning to normal operations as quickly as possible.



PLAN DEVELOPMENT

To develop the content of your pandemic contingency plan reference the information and assumptions on a pandemic and the plan objectives contained within this document. Follow the planning process outlined below. This is actually a set of sub-plans. Your plan will include the identification of the potential problem, possible solutions, responsibilities and resources necessary to address each issue.

Planning Process

Issue Identification and Analysis

Break down the pandemic hazard using these questions to compile the necessary information for your plan.

- a) **Be Informed** - How would this hazard affect my community/organization?
Learn about the pandemic hazard and the potential impact. Apply this information to your community to identify and estimate the types and magnitude of problems.
- b) **Identify potential problem** - What are the specific problems we need to solve?
Break the pandemic problems down to create a list of the specific issues you will need to deal with. Remember to consider issues within the local government organization as well as those in the community.
- c) **Consider possible solutions** - What actions are necessary to solve the problem?
Document the strategies or actions necessary for dealing with each issue. Be creative when devising and choosing solutions. Remember that a more flexible range of solutions is desirable in most circumstances, since there is much that we will not know about a pandemic until it happens. Once strategies are set, develop action procedures. These procedures should be action-oriented, and as concise and understandable as possible.
- d) **Identify who is responsible for what action** - Document responsibility for each solution to a specific organization or individual position. Don't forget to identify alternates. For organizations outside of the local government, document their roles and ensure they are aware of what is expected from them.
- e) **Outline Resource plans** - What resources are necessary to take these actions and where can we get them? Document the resources (human, facilities, equipment, supplies or information) needed for individuals or agencies to carry out their roles. Note where these resources can be found, anticipate timelines and any necessary details about getting them.



Compiling and Approving the Plan

Once the necessary information is collected, write the plan. You may wish to draw from your existing community emergency plan for format and style. Confirm that all key personnel and external stakeholders (i.e. Regional Health Authority, local business, government agency etc.) identified in your plan understand and agree to the roles or processes outlined. Have the plan reviewed by the planning team and formally approved by local government.

Printing and Distributing the Plan

Once it is approved, print and distribute the plan to all key personnel identified in it and to their alternates.

Plan Guidelines

Consider including the following in your pandemic emergency plan:

Coordination

- a) **External Emergency Coordination**
Document the organization required to coordinate local government operations and communications during a pandemic emergency. This should parallel the organization in your existing community emergency plan. Adapt it to the specific needs associated with the pandemic.
- b) **Internal Coordination Team**
In addition to managing the community's emergency, your coordination team will also have to coordinate the local government's human resource issues. This includes workplace safety and protection measures, internal communications, tracking employee health status and availability, and the re-assignment of personnel to essential services.
- c) **Emergency Operations Centre**
Your existing community emergency plan outlines information for setting up and operating an emergency operations center (EOC). Consider the size, characteristics and staffing of the community EOC to make sure it is an appropriate environment that will protect the facility and those working in it. This may include having alternates for all coordination team members and using a larger facility with more separation between participants. Your plan may even include a virtual EOC with coordination team members in different locations, connected by phone and computer.



Pandemic Monitoring and Information Collection

While preparing now saves lots of time, the earliest possible warning gives more lead time to implement the community's pandemic contingency plans. Monitoring appropriate sources provides insight into the progress of the pandemic and up-to-date information on the disease and preventive measures. Both are critical to help you decide when and how to take further action. Assign someone the responsibility of monitoring these sources and alerting your pandemic coordination team.

The Department of Health and Community Services and your Regional Health Authority will provide this information.

Communication

To respond effectively to a pandemic, you will need frequent, effective communication with employees, unions, contractors, government agencies, the public, businesses and other organizations in your community. Open lines of communication will improve working relationships, coordination and cooperation, and will help create confidence and reduce fear.

It is critical that consistent messages be provided to the public. Communications planning for a pandemic must be coordinated with other response agencies. The Department of Health and Community Services will provide messages on how people can prevent illness, how to look after family members, and where to go for health services. These messages will be delivered through normal channels, such as the Regional Health Authorities.

Local governments will have to communicate with its residents of any changes and/or delays in service. Prepare general messages ahead of time to your residents about what community services they can expect to receive during the emergency and what they can do to help themselves.

Measures to Minimize Influenza Transmission

All organizations, businesses and individuals will be expected to adhere to Public Health guidelines and to implement measures to reduce the spread of influenza. The following key measures and recommended actions should be included in the pandemic plan.

Hygiene

The most important practice to reduce the spread of the influenza virus is through proper hygiene.

- **Hand Washing** – Frequent proper hand washing is very important, particularly after coughing, sneezing, before eating, or before drinking. Ordinary soap and water are adequate or if running water is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs are effective. To



help ensure compliance it is advised that this practice become part of every day life before a pandemic occurs.

- Cover coughs and sneezes - Cover all coughs and sneezes, using a tissue, dispose of the tissue immediately in an appropriate container. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you do not have a tissue and wash hands.
- Cleaning and Disposal – The influenza virus can live on a non porous surface for up to 48 hours. Frequent cleaning of such areas is important. Appropriate disposal of tissues or other material that potentially contains the virus is important.

Action: Ensure facilities and supplies are available for staff and customers to wash their hands. Plan for appropriate cleaning of public surfaces and disposal of garbage. Communicate through posters, email, education sessions, etc.

For additional information on hygiene, visit the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website at http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/hygiene/hygiene_campaign.htm.

Management of Ill Workers

To reduce the spread of pandemic influenza, organizations must ensure that sick employees do not come to the workplace until they are well.

- Policies and guidelines on when employees do or do not report to work are needed. Plans should include a process to manage staff who become ill at work. Send employees home if they are ill and tell them to stay there for a minimum of 24 hours after symptoms have completely resolved. Follow the advice of public health officials at the time of a pandemic;
- Staff will need assurances that when they do not report to work because of illness or quarantine their benefits will be covered while they are away. Special coverage for those who do not have any sick time available may be required;
- Education of staff and customers on appropriate planning in the home, business, and community;
- Development of plans to ensure the continuation of essential services; and
- Depending on the business, consider allowing staff to work from home if possible.

Action: Implement policies and guidelines for ill employees during an influenza pandemic. Educate staff on the policies and guidelines and the importance of staying home if ill with pandemic influenza. Provide education material on personal, family and business planning.



Reduce Exposure – Social Distancing

All organizations can help reduce exposure of staff to influenza by minimizing their contact with customers or co-workers during the pandemic. Public Health leaders may direct the implementation of guidelines on social distancing in the community and work place during a pandemic influenza.

- Become familiar with social distancing methods that may be used during a pandemic to decrease the frequency of person-to-person contact (e.g., reducing hand-shaking, limiting face-to-face meetings, avoid shared workstations, promote working from home or through telephone, stagger shifts etc.);
- Reduce Interaction with Customers – Avoid visiting with people and having people at the workplace who are experiencing flu like symptoms;
- Set rules for customer interactions - If you must meet customers create buffer zones of at least one meter (three feet) between each person and keep the meetings as short as possible. If at all possible, communicate with customers by alternate means such as in writing, mail, fax, e-mail or telephone; and
- Consider public meetings that can be postponed until it is safe to do so.

Action: Develop plans for alternate delivery of services that would usually require direct interaction with customers. Identify services or events that can be postponed. Follow up with key personnel and stakeholders in the planning and exercising of alternate ways to deliver services (i.e. work from home, telephone or mail, local broadcasts, etc.)

Travel Restrictions

Travel Health Advice and Travel Restrictions will be provided by Public Health officials. Cancellation or postponing non essential travel may be necessary. Those who have to travel should talk to a travel medicine provider, public health official, or doctor about their trip and any measures that they should take.

Action: Be prepared to cancel travel plans and identify alternate arrangements where possible, i.e. video conferencing etc.

Communication

Communication of plans prior to a pandemic will help ensure a safe environment for employees and customers when it arrives.

- Provide education material to support understanding of key initiatives that will minimize the spread of pandemic influenza;
- Provide information to employees, their families and customers on being prepared for pandemic influenza outbreak in their home; and
- Early access to important public health information during an outbreak is important. Ensure contact information and important resources are kept up to date and available should an event occur.



Action: Share education material with employees, customers and key stakeholders. Share your pandemic plan with employees and stakeholders in advance of an outbreak. Maintain up-to-date contact information for use in a pandemic event for key stakeholders. Identify processes to ensure key Public Health messages, such as social distancing, are readily available to employees and organizational leaders.

Essential Services – Business Continuity Planning

While protective measures may slow the spread of disease in your organization, absenteeism may still be very high. You may not be able to keep every municipal service operating and it is important to prioritize.

It is important to keep essential services operating at all times even if it's at reduced levels. Develop plans and focus personnel and material resources to ensure your priority services are protected, supported and maintained. After securing essential services, non-essential services may continue to operate. You may choose to temporarily suspend them, and re-assign staff and resources to essential services. Residents must be notified of reductions in service or closures.

Steps to Follow in Business Continuity Planning

Document all Municipal Services

Create a list of all municipal services. Focus on the services, not the departments providing them. (For example, a fire department provides fire-fighting and rescue services, which are essential. Fire prevention and inspection services are not and should be considered non-essential).

Prioritize Services

Identify services essential to the well-being of residents and evaluate how they can best be stopped or reduced in a manner that is safe or limits adverse risks. It is also useful to consider priorities in terms of customer needs during a pandemic.

Essential municipal services typically include:

- water treatment and distribution
- sewage and treatment systems
- police, fire and paramedic services
- snow clearing and road maintenance (critical repairs only)
- garbage removal
- social services and housing services



Non-essential services generally include:

- parks, libraries, community centres and recreational facilities
- administration, taxation, licensing, permits and planning

Document Required Resources

For each essential service identified above, document the resources required to provide it.

Human Resources

- Document key positions, personnel and skills, and identify alternates. These can include existing local government employees, contractors or recently retired employees who have the basic skills and knowledge to do the job. Ensure that backups know their roles and get the necessary training to do the job at an acceptable level. The plan should also contain alternates for decision makers and financial authorities. List contact numbers for key employees and their alternates so they can be contacted quickly and easily;
- Set up a tracking system to manage staff and re-assign them to areas where they are needed;
- Maintain a list of essential services employees who should get vaccines or antiviral medications on a priority basis if there is a shortage; and
- Tell key personnel to advise and prepare their families to cope with an influenza pandemic without their presence.

Physical Resources

- Essential physical resources can include key equipment, vehicles, computers, communication systems, supplies and other materials;
- Note sources of goods, materials and services for your essential business operations. Check to see if your regular suppliers (and their suppliers) have emergency plans for business continuity;
- Identify alternate suppliers or products as a backup if your usual supplier is not available;
- Consider using resources that may be available from a non-essential department;
- Note what resources may have long lead times or may be difficult to find during a pandemic. Consider increasing inventories of essential supplies, parts, pandemic-related supplies, etc; and
- Note what systems or equipment (computer or processing) rely on regular intervention or maintenance to operate properly. Note how long they can operate without intervention and plan around that.



Information Resources

- Ensure you have enough documentation and training for employee alternates to do their jobs without other support people; and
- Keep documents on key processes or equipment up-to-date and readily available.

Recovery Plans

Recovery is generally one of the most overlooked aspects of emergency planning. Even without obvious physical or structural damage, municipal governments, the economy, employees, and general community well-being will be affected. Planning for recovery, between and after the pandemic waves, will help speed the return to normal, reduce stress and cut costs to the community.

A Recovery Plan Should Include:

- processes to manage donations of funds, goods and services;
- cooperation with government and non-government agencies and programs in the recovery effort;
- coordination of a multi-agency community needs assessment to focus on those affected and least able to cope financially or emotionally;
- coordination of recovery activities including counselling services, social services, food banks, etc; and
- keeping the public and target groups informed through the media, internet, written materials or community meetings.

Economic Recovery

Small and medium-size businesses are more likely to fail after a disaster. Specific sectors such as tourist and public venues, which may be closed during the pandemic, are likely to be among the hardest hit.

Local governments will need to work closely with business leaders to actively promote community support and economic development, through advertising and other development incentives to restore the local economy.

Psychological Recovery

Fear, the stress of caring for the sick, grieving for the dead, unemployment and many other social issues related to a pandemic will take an emotional toll on most of the population. People will be affected by the pandemic and its aftermath in



various ways and to different degrees. Many will recover on their own, but some will need information or additional support to cope.

Consider Developing Plans to:

- distribute information provided by the Department of Health and Community Services;
- provide feedback to your Regional Health Authority on residents' concerns that were not addressed in information packages;
- work with your Regional Health Authority to provide counselling and debriefing sessions;
- hold ceremonies to recognize the event; and
- encourage workers or residents with health concerns to contact their local health care provider for advice and help.

Organizational Recovery

Local government may face a variety of internal recovery challenges:

- Psychological stress, low morale and temporary loss of productivity are likely because of the deaths of co-workers, family or friends. Stress counselling and ceremonies to mark lost employees may be required;
- Loss of corporate knowledge is possible if employees die during a pandemic;
- You may need to recruit and train replacement employees and re-assign employees to maintain operations; and
- There will be a backlog of work caused by business disruptions.



PLAN MAINTENANCE

Updating the Plan

Like your community emergency plan, contingency plans need to be updated periodically to include new information or practices. They must reflect changes in the community and its organizations. Assign responsibility for periodic meetings and updating of documents to maintain the plan's relevance and accuracy.

Training and Awareness

Education raises awareness of the risk and can prepare individuals and organizations for their roles during a pandemic. Local governments should consider the following:

- Send participants on general emergency preparedness and response training or pandemic-specific training offered by government or private sector organizations. For more information on Emergency Management Training contact Fire and Emergency Services-NL at (709) 729-3703 or online at <http://www.ma.gov.nl.ca/ma/fes/Default.htm>
- Hold sessions with the public, local businesses, and other organizations to raise awareness of the risks of a pandemic and the need to prepare themselves for this type of emergency.
- Hold employee training and awareness sessions on the risks and outline your organizational response to a pandemic.
- Provide necessary job training to staff who are expected to serve as backups to other key personnel.

Exercises

Exercises are a powerful tool that can be used to practice, educate, motivate and test plans, procedures, or technology. Municipal governments should consider the following:

- Participate in provincial or regional emergency response or pandemic-specific exercises when invited.
- Conduct community and internal emergency response and pandemic-specific exercises. For information on planning and conducting an exercise, contact Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador at (709) 729-3703.

Resource Development

Resources are critical to making sure your pandemic contingency plan works and that critical equipment and services remain operating. Local governments should budget for specific resources with long lead times or anticipated high demand to help the community cope with a pandemic.



CONCLUSION

The success of pandemic influenza planning and preparedness comes with effort and commitment on the part of all stakeholders. Diligent planning by local government and all community stakeholders will pay big dividends by protecting employees and residents and limiting the social, economic and psychological effects of a pandemic.

Pandemic planning is an opportunity to add to overall community preparedness. Parts of a pandemic plan can be effective during many other local community crises, such as a labour interruption. It can also improve the local government's ability to manage other operational risks associated with supply chains and transportation disruptions.



APPENDIX A – Hand Hygiene

Hand washing/hand hygiene reduces the number of micro-organisms on the hands and is the most important practice to prevent the spread of infection.

WHEN:

Before:

- direct, hands-on care of others
- preparing, handling, serving or eating food
- feeding others

After:

- contact with items known or considered to be contaminated
- personal use of toilet, wiping nose or coughing

PRODUCTS:

Plain soap and water:

- recommended for routine hand washing

Alcohol-based hand rub:

- products containing a minimum of 60 per cent alcohol for use when plain soap and water are not available
- visible, heavy soil on hands should be removed before using alcohol-based hand rubs for maximum effectiveness

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS:

Using plain soap and water:

- Wet hands under warm running water.
- Apply soap and distribute over hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds, to create a good lather.
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel.
- Turn off faucet using a clean disposable towel.

Using an alcohol-based hand rub:

- Apply two to three millilitres of the product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and palms.
- Let product dry 15 to 20 seconds.
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task.



APPENDIX B – Prevention

What can I do to prevent myself from getting infected with influenza during a pandemic?

If a new type of influenza emerges and causes a pandemic, the virus will likely spread just like other influenza viruses do each winter. Influenza is highly contagious and spreads quickly in families and communities. To reduce your risk of infection:

Improve your overall health

Healthier people are better at fighting disease. To stay healthy, eat healthy foods, live an active lifestyle and don't smoke. Avoid heavy alcohol consumption and try to maintain a positive, balanced psychological outlook.

Wash your hands often

Washing hands is the most effective way to prevent the spread of disease. Get into the habit of washing your hands often with soap and warm water, scrubbing your wrists, palms, fingers and nails for 10 to 15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. This should be done especially before meals, after using the toilet and after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Teach your children to do the same.

Avoid unnecessary visits to people who have the flu

This will help prevent you from becoming infected. This advice must be balanced with the need to provide support and care to sick people. Caregivers should follow the advice provided by the Department of Health and Community Services or local Health Authority on home isolation.

Avoid large crowds

Large crowds are ideal for the spread of influenza, so consider staying at home. Wearing masks to prevent transmission of influenza is not helpful when it is circulating in the community.

Don't share eating utensils or drinks

If a family member is sick, keep their personal items (e.g. towels and toothbrushes) separate from those of the rest of the family.

Get a vaccine when available

Vaccination is considered an important measure for preventing influenza and reducing the impact of epidemics. Seasonal influenza vaccines have been available and used for more than 60 years. It may take 6 months from the time a seed strain of the pandemic influenza virus is isolated for vaccine production, until the vaccine is ready to be administered. Once available, the Department of Health and Community Services and Regional Health Authority will coordinate administration of the vaccine.



Take antiviral drugs if recommended by your doctor.

If taken within 48 hours of getting sick, antivirals may reduce influenza symptoms, shorten the length of the illness and potentially reduce serious complications. Antivirals work by reducing the ability of the virus to reproduce; however, they do not provide immunity from the virus.

What if I think I have the flu?

Most people with influenza recover without any serious problems. The disease can last four to seven days and leave people with a cough and fatigue for several weeks. In general, there is no specific treatment. Antivirals may occasionally be prescribed by your doctor. Antibiotics are not effective against the influenza virus, although they may reduce complications caused by bacteria, such as pneumonia. Avoid going to work or social gatherings if you are ill. Call ahead and follow directions if you need to visit your doctor. At the time of a pandemic, the Department of Health and Community Services will provide information on steps you can take to help care for yourself and others.

What if my child is sick?

Most children get better from influenza without any specific treatment. Sick children should be kept home from school and child care. At the time of a pandemic, the Department of Health and Community Services will provide information on steps you can take to help care for your children.

DURING A PANDEMIC, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO:

- Follow directions given by Public Health.
- Stay informed as directions may change as more information becomes available about the characteristics of the particular virus causing the outbreak.
- Follow infection control procedures at all times. Providing care to someone with influenza will be common during a pandemic. The likelihood of transmitting the disease is reduced by following basic precautions. Watch the Department of Health and Community Services website for updates.



APPENDIX C – Local Government Checklist

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Local Government Planning Checklist

By preparing for and managing outbreaks of a pandemic influenza, local municipal governments can and should ensure continuity of government, maintain essential community services, and assist individuals, local businesses, and neighbouring communities in coping with illness and its impact.

A local government will be required to coordinate its own response to a pandemic. It may also be called upon to support the emergency response efforts of the Province, Regional Health Authorities, and neighbouring communities.

Pandemic influenza preparedness includes a contingency plan that builds upon the strengths inherent in existing emergency response plans. An emergency response plan for instance would identify lines of authority, outline information for setting up and operating an emergency operations centre, and provide contact information for staff and stakeholders.

The following checklist will assist municipal planners initiate, develop and implement a pandemic influenza response plan.

PART 1

Tasks	Responsible Individual / Group	Not Started	In Progress	Completed	Completed Date
Form a local influenza pandemic planning team		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
List essential business functions		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare a list of alternate personnel		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
List alternate suppliers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare employee policies		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare employee awareness materials		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan to stockpile essential resource		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prepare a pandemic management plan		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



PART 2 A Pandemic Management Plan will include

Set Priorities For:	Responsible Individual / Group	Not Started	In Progress	Completed	Completed Date
Essential employees		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Continuing local government and administrative support (plan for 35% staff reduction, establish essential services and employees)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintaining safety and security services (fire, ambulance, police, emergency transportation)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintaining the integrity of essential public works, municipal services such as water treatment and delivery, waste management, garbage disposal, utilities, road maintenance and snow clearing		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Working with the Regional Health Authority and the Department of Health and Community Services in providing information and advice to the public via regular announcements and prepared information guidelines as well as providing feedback information on affected population and other local needs		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Providing emergency social support to members of the community, including non-medical care, transportation and monitoring the health status of the sick in collaboration with Human Resources Labour & Employment		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Closing public buildings where it is deemed to be in the best interest of public safety and minimizing the spread of infection as directed by the Medical Officer of Health		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establishing alternative care facilities, triage facilities, morgue facilities, immunization, and isolation as requested by the Regional Health Authorities, to facilitate provision of health services to the public		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Set Priorities For:	Responsible Individual / Group	Not Started	In Progress	Completed	Completed Date
Participating on a committee of local business persons who will assist one another in maintaining a level of service to the community, particularly those services involving access to pharmaceuticals, retail food purchases, gasoline and other commerce deemed necessary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Service agreements with neighbouring Local Service Districts and Unincorporated Communities		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establishing mutual-aid agreements with neighbouring communities (pool staffing and equipment resources for critical services)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Providing for increased burials and management of the deceased		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting child and family services for children and others needing temporary care due to loss or infirmity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintaining open lines of communications (employees, unions, contractors, government agencies, the public, businesses, and other organizations in the community)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Collaboration with Animal Health Division of the Department of Natural Resources and other animal health agencies		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Providing services as requested to support hospitals and clinics where non traditional triage, vaccine and antiviral treatment centres may be required (e.g. Traffic flow, building access, security etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintaining essential lists of services and facilities along with up-to-date contact information (eg., service groups, church groups, halls, schools, emergency service vehicles, others)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

