



COUNTY OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

POLICY

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

CREATED: 2/9/2025

REVISED: 7/11/2026

TOTAL PAGES: 4

PURPOSE

Business continuity means ensuring that essential business functions can survive a natural disaster, technological failure, human error, or other disruption. Many existing business continuity plans anticipate disruptions such as fires, earthquakes, and floods. These events are restricted to certain geographic areas and the time frames are fairly well defined and limited. Pandemic disease, however, demands a different set of continuity assumptions since it will be widely dispersed geographically and potentially arrives in waves that could last several months at a time.

Assignment of Ownership of the Pandemic Disease Plan

A pandemic disease plan or disease containment plan should be developed for County of Northern Lights and a coordinator appointed. Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for dealing with disease issues and their impact at the workplace. This may include contacting local health department and health care providers in advance and developing and implementing protocols for response to ill individuals.

Assumptions

A pandemic disease will spread rapidly and easily from person to person, affecting all businesses due to absenteeism. Businesses that are relied upon by other businesses will be facing the same massive absentee rates and will be unable to provide essential components to maintain the daily operations.

Risk assessments to identify the essential/critical components of our business operation need to be conducted.

Recognize that a pandemic includes:

- Healthcare services not being available (they are already full at present with the usual ailments).
- Schools, churches and other public places not being open.
- Borders are partially or fully closed, especially airports, leaving people (our families, employees, business partners, customers and suppliers) "stranded".
- Essential materials and supplies may be limited due to distribution chains that are affected by the travel restrictions or absentee workers supporting those transportation means.
- Essential services around utilities, food distribution/access and banking systems may not be at "normal levels"; access to cash flow could be tight.
- People may not be willing to or able to come to work.

Effective Internal/Employee Communication Procedure

Communications during a pandemic involves both internal communications and external communications. Internal communication will be provided to employees to educate them about pandemic diseases and measures they can take to be prepared.

Key contacts, a chain of communications and contact numbers for employees, and processes for tracking business and employees status should be developed.

Risk communication is critical to inform employees regarding changes in the pandemic status. The following is one method for providing such information.

Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Advisory: provides key information for a specific incident or situation; might not require immediate action.

Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.



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Provide continuous updates through internal & external communications when a pandemic is imminent:

- Notification to employees of operational changes
- Provide frequent updates about the pandemic status
- Provide advisories and alerts as conditions change
- Ensure vendors and suppliers have available a dedicated communications contact
- Monitor local, state, and federal pandemic updates

We will use our phone systems that can perform automatic dialing from a database with each employee contact number to send notifications and messages about alerts. The use of the company website also will serve as a portal for sharing information with employees and vendors.

Effective External/Customer Communication Procedure

A procedure must be developed to notify key contacts including both customers and suppliers in the event an outbreak has impacted our ability to perform services. This procedure must also include notification to customers and suppliers when operations resume.

Business Continuity Planning

Business continuity plans should be prepared so that if a large or significant absenteeism of personnel become ill or changes in business practices are required business operations can be effectively maintained.

COMMAND STAFF	
Incident Commander (CAO)	Organizes and directs all aspects of the incident response
Public Information Officer (Community Services)	Creates and releases upon approval from the incident commander all information to the staff, media and public.
Liaison Officer (CAO)	Establishes and maintains relationships with outside organizations
Safety Officer (Safety Coordinator)	Ensures the safety of all persons involved with the pandemic
OPERATIONS SECTION	
Operations Section Chief (Director of Public Works)	Initiates and manages ongoing operations throughout a pandemic
LOGISTICS SECTION	
Logistics Section Chief (Purchasing/Inventory Manager)	Meets the goods, services, and staffing needs of the operation during the pandemic
PLANNING SECTION	
Planning Section Chief (Safety Coordinator)	Collects information and resources potentially relevant to the pandemic and company operations
FINANCE SECTION	
Finance Section Chief (Director of Finance)	Monitors all expenditures and ensures fiscal resource availability during the pandemic

Pandemic Response by Pandemic Phase

Currently the WHO has created various phases for a pandemic but does not always relate to events locally.

Level 0 (WHO Phase 3) - Novel virus alert- not human-to-human transmission



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Level 1 (WHO Phase 4) - Confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission of novel disease virus.

Level 2 (WHO Phase 5) - Suspected/confirmed cases in the Tulsa area.

Level 3 (WHO Phase 5) - Numerous suspected/confirmed cases in the Tulsa area.

Work at Home or Stay at Home Policy

Flexible work policies should be developed as possible. Workers should be encouraged to stay at home when ill, when having to care for ill family members, or when caring for children when schools close, without fear of reprisal. Telecommuting or other work-at-home strategies should be developed.

Infection Control Measures

Guidelines for infection control are important to clarify the routes of transmission and the ways to interrupt transmission through measures of hygiene. Infection control is an essential component of pandemic management and a component of public health measures. Essential measures include:

- Hand washing and use of hand sanitizers should be encouraged by County of Northern Lights supervision. Hand washing facilities, hand sanitizers, tissues, no touch trash cans, hand soap and disposable towels should be provided by County of Northern Lights.
- Workers are encouraged to obtain appropriate immunizations to help avoid disease. Granting time off work to obtain the vaccine will be considered when vaccines become available in the community.
- Limiting large or crowded gatherings of personnel if an outbreak or increased level of disease is in progress
 - Social distancing including increasing the space between employee work areas and decreasing the possibility of contact by limiting large or close contact gatherings should be considered.
- Equipment and/or working surfaces shall be cleaned periodically. Clean all areas that are likely to have frequent hand contact (like doorknobs, faucets, handrails) periodically and when visibly soiled. Work surfaces should also be cleaned frequently using normal cleaning products.

Additional examples of infection control measures include:

- Stay at home when you are sick. If possible, stay away from work, school and from running errands. You will help others from catching your illness.
- Cover your coughs and sneeze into tissue, or cough into your shirt sleeve.
- Enhance existing housekeeping service by wiping down and disinfecting work areas (i.e. keyboards, telephones, desks, etc.) frequently.
- Enhance housekeeping services for general public use areas several times throughout the work period.
- Use personal protective equipment where appropriate to minimize exposure (i.e. gloves- for handling money, masks- for ill employees)

Implementation, Testing, and Revision of the Plan

The Pandemic Plan is reviewed and/or tested. The plan and emergency communication strategies should be periodically tested to ensure it is effective and workable.

Testing the plan will be accomplished by conducting exercises. Exercises range from low stress to full scale, hands on drills. A tabletop exercise is the easiest way to begin testing the plan. This type of exercise involves having discussions regarding a scenario that challenges the plan and the decision makers during an emergency. Functional exercises take on an additional level of complexity, in that they actually require participants to conduct functional components of the plan. This usually involves planning specific scenarios, creating pretend data and present issues that target an area within the plan to be tested.

Each of these methods of testing the plan requires extensive planning for the exercise and the evaluation. The evaluation is critical to revising the plan, by capturing actual responses during the exercise or drill objectively. Once this data is captured, an after-action report with recommendations to revising the plan should be completed within a few weeks of the exercise.



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Process for Implementing Lessons Learned Following a Pandemic Event

Following a pandemic event, the person responsible for implementation of the plan will identify learning opportunities and take action to implement any corrective actions.

TRAINING

Employees will be trained on health issues of the pertinent disease to include prevention of illness, initial disease symptoms, preventing the spread of the disease, and when it is appropriate to return to work after illness. Disease containment plans and expectations should be shared with employees. Communicating information with non-English speaking employees or those with disabilities must be considered.

Documentation of all training is required.

Chief Elected Official

Chief Administrative Officer