

What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when a new virus emerges in the human population, spreading easily in a sustained manner, and causing serious illness. An epidemic describes a smaller-scale infectious outbreak, within a region or population, that emerges at a disproportional rate. Governments and organizations must prepare to continue their essential functions during widespread infectious disease outbreaks and include specific mitigation measures in their continuity of operations plans.

Where is Pandemic Information Available?

- The World Health Organization
www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/en/
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov/
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm

About FEMA's National Continuity Program

Serving as the Nation's center of excellence for continuity planning, guidance, and operations, FEMA National Continuity Programs (NCP) executes its vision to ensure essential functions of government continue at all levels. Our mission is to safeguard the implementation of Executive Branch continuity and assist the continuity planning efforts of federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government and non-governmental stakeholders to sustain the continuous performance of essential functions and critical services under all conditions. To accomplish this, NCP provides guidance, technical assistance, planning, training, and workshop support to other Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA components, federal departments and agencies, state, local, territorial, and tribal (SLTT) governments, and other members of the whole community, to include private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact FEMA National Continuity Programs. For FEMA Region-specific information, contact the appropriate Regional Continuity Manager from the list below.

FEMA Region	Location
FEMA HQ	National Capital Region
Region I	CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
Region II	NJ, NY, PR, VI
Region III	DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV
Region IV	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN
Region V	IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI
Region VI	AR, LA, NM, OK, TX
Region VII	IA, KS, MO, NE
Region VIII	CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY
Region IX	AZ, CA, HI, NV, Pacific Territories
Region X	AK, ID, OR, WA

Regional offices may be contacted via:
FEMA-CGC@fema.dhs.gov

Website

Continuity news, tools, guidance, and other useful resources may be found on FEMA's website at:
www.fema.gov/national-continuity-programs.

Continuity Updates

To receive free continuity e-bulletins, register at:
www.fema.gov/subscribe-receive-free-email-updates.



Continuity Planning for Pandemics and Widespread Infectious Diseases

National Continuity Programs

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FEMA

How Does Pandemic Affect the Nation?

A pandemic may cause severe impacts to an organization's ability to perform its essential functions. Whether because of the onset of symptoms, the need to care for stricken family members, or the desire to avoid public areas to decrease exposure to the disease, the ability or willingness of large numbers of the population to move about in public will likely be severely curtailed. Pandemics are rare, but likely to cause travel restrictions, business and school closures, and significant economic impacts.

[The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza](#), recommends organizations plan for a 40 percent absentee rate for about two weeks at the height of a pandemic, with lower levels of staff absent for a few weeks on either side of the peak.

Continuity Planning Considerations for Pandemics and Widespread Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Pandemics and widespread infectious disease outbreaks demand a different set of continuity planning considerations. Disease outbreaks may be widely dispersed geographically, impact large numbers of the population, and could arrive in waves lasting several months at a time.

Organizations are encouraged to establish a pandemic annex to their existing continuity plans to ensure they adequately address conditions specific to disease outbreak, including increased absenteeism, social distancing procedures, and impacts on interdependencies.

This brochure lists the elements of a continuity plan from Federal Continuity Directive 1 and identifies additional pandemic-related considerations.

Program Management, Plans, and Procedures:

Establish additional continuity program planning objectives and procedures to assist organizations in ensuring performance of their essential functions during a pandemic.

Essential Functions: Consider performance of essential functions beyond 30 days and the impact disease outbreak may have on interdependencies and supply chains.

Orders of Succession and Delegations of Authority:

Ensure orders of succession are three-deep and account for the expected rate of absenteeism.

Communications and Information Systems:

Consider the need for additional laptops, telecommunications, network capacity, and mobile devices to enable employees to perform essential functions from remote locations.

Essential Records Management: Test, review, and update essential records, databases, and systems. These resources will need to be available electronically to employees who are teleworking or located at alternate sites.

Alternate Locations: Consider the impact the pandemic may have on logistical support services and infrastructure systems at alternate locations. Teleworking may be an alternative to ensure social distancing, though information technology staff will need to evaluate whether systems can accommodate the volume of staff envisioned to telework.

Human Resources: Provide employees with information and advisories about the disease outbreak. Promote guidance developed by health and safety authorities to include infection control, personal hygiene, social distancing techniques, and travel restrictions. Consider the need to cross train employees to ensure availability of staff to perform essential functions. Where appropriate, provide contact telephone numbers for staff using telework or alternate locations.

Devolution: Consider full or partial devolution in the event a disease outbreak renders leadership and key staff incapable of performing essential functions. Maintain situational awareness of the health status of key personnel throughout the pandemic so prompt devolution action may be taken should critical staff become ill.

Reconstitution: Consider a plan to replace employees unable to return to work. Establish procedures in conjunction with public health authorities to ensure facilities are safe to resume operations, including measures to guard against the spread of disease within the workplace. Personnel returning to a work facility should be provided specific instructions for

the actions they should take to avoid spreading infection to their colleagues.

Tests, Training, and Exercises: Test, train, and exercise capabilities, to include telework, to maintain essential functions for extended periods of time.

How Can I Find Training on Continuity Planning for Pandemics?

FEMA NCP developed the *Determined Accord Workshop*, as well as two independent study courses, IS 520: *Introduction to Continuity of Operations Planning for Pandemic Influenzas* and IS 522: *Exercising Continuity Plans for Pandemic Course*. The workshop and courses assist organizations in addressing planning considerations for a pandemic. Please visit the Emergency Management Institute Independent Study site page below for course descriptions: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-520>.

To learn more about *Determined Accord* deliveries near you, or to request a copy of the workshop, please contact your Regional Continuity Program Manager. NCP has also developed a Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Plan Template to assist in establishing continuity pandemic plans.

Continuity Guidance Circular and Continuity Resource Toolkit

The Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC) serves as a resource for organizations to appropriately integrate and synchronize continuity efforts and can be used as a reference when developing continuity plans, programs, and processes. The CGC can be found at: www.fema.gov/continuity-guidance-circular-cgc.

A supporting Continuity Resource Toolkit provides examples, tools, and templates for implementing each chapter of the CGC. In the future, FEMA will continue to build and distribute tools and information to assist organizations develop and maintain a successful continuity program and plan. The Toolkit can be found at: <https://www.fema.gov/continuity-resource-toolkit>.