

## 10 Steps Your Business Can Take

- Check that existing contingency plans are applicable to a pandemic.
- In particular, check to see that core business activities can be sustained over several weeks.
- Plan accordingly for interruptions of essential governmental services like sanitation, water, power, and disruptions to the food supply.
- Identify your company's essential functions and the individuals who perform them. The absence of these individuals could seriously impair business continuity. Build in the training redundancy necessary to ensure that their work can be done in the event of an absentee rate of 25-30%.
- Maintain a healthy work environment by ensuring adequate air circulation and posting tips on how to stop the spread of germs at work. Promote hand and respiratory hygiene. Ensure wide and easy availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer products.
- Determine which outside activities are critical to maintaining operations and develop alternatives in case they cannot function normally. For example, what transportation systems are needed to provide essential materials? Does the business operate on "just in time" inventory or is there typically some reserve?
- Establish or expand policies and tools that enable employees to work from home with appropriate security and network access to applications.
- Expand online and self-service options for customers and business partners.
- Tell the workforce about the threat of pandemic flu and the steps the company is taking to prepare for it. In emergencies, individuals demonstrate a decreased tendency to comprehend instructions, so clear and frequent communication is essential.
- Update sick leave and family and medical leave policies and communicate with employees about the importance of staying away from the workplace if they become ill. Concern about lost wages is the largest deterrent to self-quarantine.

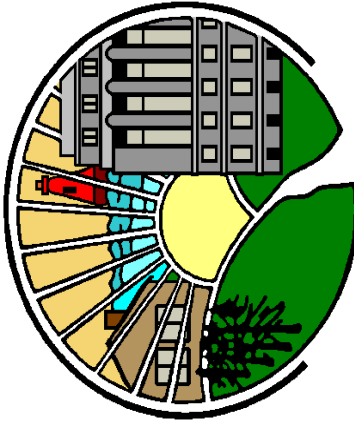
## Key Differences Between Annual Flu & Pandemic Flu

ANNUAL FLU	PANDEMIC FLU
Occurs every year during the winter months.	Occurs three to four times a century and can take place in any season.
Affects 5-20 percent of the U.S. population.	Experts predict an infection rate of 25-50 percent of the population, depending on the severity of the virus strain.
Globally, kills 500,000-1 million people each year, 36,000-40,000 in the U.S.	The worst pandemic of the last century -- the "Spanish Flu" of 1918 -- killed 500,000 in the U.S. and 50 million worldwide.
Most people recover within a week or two.	Usually associated with a higher severity of illness and, consequently, a higher risk of death.
Deaths generally confined to "at risk" groups, such as the elderly (over 65 years of age); the young (children aged 6-23 months); those with existing medical conditions like lung diseases, diabetes, cancer, kidney, or heart problems; and people with compromised immune systems.	All age groups may be at risk for infection, not just "at risk" groups. Otherwise fit adults could be at relatively greater risk, based on patterns of previous epidemics. For example, adults under age 35 (a key segment of the U.S. workforce) were disproportionately affected during the 1918 pandemic.
Vaccination is effective because the virus strain in circulation each winter can be fairly reliably predicted.	A vaccine against pandemic flu may not be available at the start of a pandemic. New strains of viruses must be accurately identified, and producing an effective vaccine could take six months.
Annual vaccination, when the correct virus strain is used, is fairly reliable and antiviral drugs are available for those most at risk of becoming seriously ill.	Antiviral drugs may be in limited supply, and their effectiveness will only be known definitively once the pandemic is underway.



## It's Not Flu As Usual

## What Businesses Need to Know About Pandemic Flu



## Sheboygan County Division of Public Health

1011 N. 8th Street  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
Phone: (920) 459-4382  
Fax: (920) 459-0529  
Web: [http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/html/d\\_lhhs\\_pbiclhth.html](http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/html/d_lhhs_pbiclhth.html)

## Protecting Employees' Health

Flu is caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs, and is generally spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. An effective vaccine, when available, will be the best safeguard against pandemic flu. In addition, the following simple precautions can also help. Recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, these precautions should be communicated to the workforce and posted in common areas.

- ✔ **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ✔ **Stay home when you're sick or have flu symptoms.** Get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.
- ✔ **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.** It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- ✔ **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you against germs.
- ✔ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- ✔ **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious food, and avoid smoking which may increase the risk of serious consequences if you do contract the flu.

## Plan Now To Keep Your Business In Business

"Business continuity" means ensuring that essential business functions can survive a natural disaster, technological failure, human error, or other disruption. In recent times, assuring business continuity has also meant planning for terrorist-related biological, chemical, or nuclear attacks.

Many existing business continuity plans anticipate disruptions such as fires, earthquakes, and floods; these events are generally restricted to a certain geographic area, and the time frames are fairly well defined and limited. Pandemic flu, however, demands a different set of continuity assumptions since it will be widely dispersed geographically and potentially arrive in waves that could last several months at a time.

Depending on the flu strain and based on previous pandemics, public health officials project **cumulative absentee rates of 25-30 percent over three to four months**. Absentees will include sick employees, and those who must care for others who are sick. Fear will also impact rates of absenteeism.

## What To Do In The Event Of An Outbreak

If a pandemic flu strikes, government health officials will issue information and warnings and work with the media to disseminate advice on how to avoid becoming ill. Your company's manager, human resources department, and employees should pay close attention to the guidance provided by local and state health departments and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Other organizations that provide assistance in public health emergencies would include the American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)), and the World Health Organization ([www.who.org](http://www.who.org)).

In a worst case scenario, "business as usual" may cease. Government health officials may have to implement dramatic measures, including shutting down certain businesses that involve high levels of interaction with the public, such as restaurants and theaters. Health officials may also have to restrict travel, cancel public events such as concerts or sports, and close schools.

