

# Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Plan

**Presentation to:**  
**Pandemic Summit**  
September 14, 2006



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Disaster Response

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## DEFINITION

- Continuity of operations (COOP) is defined as the activities of individual agencies and their sub-components to ensure that the capability exists to continue essential agency functions across a wide range of potential emergencies.
- The Federal Executive Branch provides guidance on effective continuity planning in *Federal Preparedness Circular — 65, Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations (FPC-65)* and for State and local continuity planners in *Interim Guidance on Continuity of Operations Planning for State and Local Governments*.
- Most sectors of private industry engage in business continuity planning, which outlines a set of procedures that define how a business will sustain or recover its critical functions in the event of an unplanned disruption to normal business operations.
- Planning for an influenza pandemic must recognize that the next pandemic may come in waves, each lasting weeks or months, and pass through communities of all sizes across the United States and around the world.

## ASSUMPTIONS

- Unlike many other catastrophic events, an influenza pandemic will not directly affect the physical infrastructure of an organization, it will ultimately have an impact on an organization's human resources by removing essential personnel from the workplace for weeks or months.
- Organizations should include considerations for protecting the health and safety of employees during a pandemic in their business continuity planning.
- Assume a 40% staff vacancy in a severe pandemic influenza event
- Critical goods and services provided by contractors, consultants and vendors may be erratic.

## ESSENTIAL VS. NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- Business operations critical to survival and recovery should be identified.
- Organizations should identify the suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses they must interact with on a daily basis.
- Professional relationships with more than one supplier may be necessary should a primary contractor be unable to provide the required service.
- A disaster that shuts down a key supplier could be devastating to a business. In addition, organization-related domestic and international travel may be affected by a pandemic (e.g., quarantine, border closures).
- The analysis required for pandemic preparedness planning is not fundamentally different from that required for all-hazard COOP planning.

## ESSENTIAL VS. NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- Services provided by personnel may be categorized as critical or essential in light of their importance to business continuity (i.e., from the perspective of a business or organization) or in light of their contribution to maintaining critical infrastructure (i.e., from a societal or national perspective).
- Managers must make determinations about which employees perform essential functions at the business or organization level.
- Organizations should carefully assess how a company functions, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating by location and function during a pandemic.

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Plans and Procedures
- Essential Functions
- Delegations of Authority
- Orders of Succession
- Alternate Operating Facilities
- Interoperable and Effective Communications
- Critical Business Records and Databases
- Personnel
- Testing, Training and Exercises
- Devolution of Control and Direction
- Reconstitution

# SUMMARY

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