

Is Your Workplace Pandemic-Ready?

An influenza pandemic could affect your organization's productivity, supply, demand, and finances.



What is an influenza pandemic?

An influenza pandemic occurs when a new (novel) human virus causes a global outbreak of serious illness. Because there is no warning and little natural immunity, the new disease can spread easily from person to person and country to country. A pandemic influenza virus can travel around the world in several waves over the course of 18 to 24 months.

For example, Novel Influenza A (H1N1), which started in Mexico and was detected in the United States in April 2009, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Within two months, the new H1N1 virus had spread to more than 70 countries throughout the world; it is now found nearly worldwide. Since influenza viruses change rapidly, no one knows what the full impact of this virus will be as it runs its course.

Why do workplaces need to prepare?

In a pandemic, employers play a key role in:

- Protecting their employees' health and safety
- Keeping their organizations functioning
- Limiting the negative effects of an influenza pandemic in their communities

Most organizations have plans in place for any number of short-term crises, but not for the unique conditions of an influenza pandemic.

By taking steps to prepare now, organizations can better handle anticipated disruptions, such as employee absenteeism, supply interruptions, and increased or decreased demand for goods and services, etc.

What can employers do now to prepare?

- Create a business continuity plan that specifically takes into account the effects of a long-term health emergency such as an influenza pandemic
- Implement health and safety policies to help reduce the spread of influenza in the workplace
- Educate staff about pandemic influenza, including steps to reduce the spread of disease
- Enable employees to learn from New Jersey's **Pandemic Influenza Awareness Program** which targets workplace preparedness



<http://nj.gov/health/training/panflu>

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Can your employees answer these questions?



Don't wait! Encourage employees to take New Jersey's Pandemic Influenza Awareness Program now.

Pandemic Influenza Awareness Program

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services offers a free Pandemic Influenza Awareness Program to educate you and your employees. Each of the six modules in the course addresses a different concern related to pandemic flu, and the entire course takes less than two hours to complete. It is available in both English and Spanish, and in both multimedia and print versions. It is highly recommended for organizations of all sizes, since none are safe from the impact of an influenza pandemic.

The course is designed to help participants:

- Understand the possible effects of an influenza pandemic in a community and what community leaders may need to do to reduce these effects
- Develop a Pandemic Flu Personal Emergency Plan
- Reduce the risk of getting the flu and spreading it to others
- Provide care for ill persons in the home
- Locate resources that guide the development of business continuity plans
- Understand where to get help for the emotional stress a pandemic may cause
- Identify reliable sources of public health information

The program can be taken as an online course, downloaded onto CDs or an organization's intranet, or by printed copy.

This free program is available at: <http://nj.gov/health/training/panflu>

The Pandemic Influenza Awareness Program is made possible by the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

