

# TIP SHEET: PLANNING FOR A PANDEMIC (EMPLOYERS)

In the event of a pandemic, businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Planning for any pandemic is critical. As with any catastrophe, having a contingency plan is essential.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have developed guidelines, including checklists, to assist employers in planning for a pandemic outbreak as well as for other comparable catastrophes. Some of the things to think about include:

## **PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR BUSINESS**

- Identify critical employees and processes required to maintain business operations.
- Plan for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in your business during a pandemic.
- Determine the potential impact on business-related travel – both domestic and international.
- Maintain up-to-date, reliable pandemic information.
- Establish an emergency communication plan.

## **PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS**

- Forecast and allow for employee absences.
- Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand shaking, meetings, etc.).
- Evaluate employee access to healthcare services during a pandemic.
- Identify employees and key customers who may have special needs.

## **ESTABLISH POLICIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING A PANDEMIC**

- Establish policies for employee compensation and sick leave unique to a pandemic.
- Establish policies for flexible hours and worksite (e.g. telecommuting).
- Establish policies for preventing the disease's spread at the worksite.
- Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to the disease or who become ill at the worksite.
- Establish policies for restricting travel to affected areas.
- Set up procedures for activating and terminating the company's response plan.

## **ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS DURING A PANDEMIC**

- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand hygiene products, tissues and waste receptacles).
- Enhance infrastructure to support employee telecommuting and remote customer access.

## **COMMUNICATE TO AND EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES**

- Disseminate materials covering pandemic fundamentals.
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety and plan communications accordingly.
- Inform your employees as to what your pandemic response plan is.
- Develop platforms for communicating your action plan status.

# TIP SHEET: PLANNING FOR A PANDEMIC (EMPLOYERS)

## SOURCES FOR CREDIBLE OUTBREAK-RELATED HEALTH INFORMATION

### CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<https://www.cdc.gov>

### WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization  
525 23rd Street, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20037  
1-202-974-3000  
<https://www.who.int>

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

In addition to your EAP, the below resources may be of further assistance:

### DISASTER DISTRESS HELPLINE, BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and Español)  
SMS: Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746  
SMS (Español): "Hablanos" al 66746  
TTY: 1-800-846-8517  
Website in English: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>  
Website in español: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol>

### SAMHSA'S NATIONAL HELPLINE

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and Español)  
Website: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

### SAMHSA DISASTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
Email: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)  
Website: <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>