

# BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING BASICS



What should my business do to prepare for a pandemic?

## 10 steps your business should take now to prepare:

### ★ Step 1: Maintain a healthy work environment.

- Ensure adequate air circulation.
- Post tips on how to stop the spread of germs.
- Promote hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Ensure wide and easy availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (not just in the places already required by law).
- Remind employees to report any illness to their manager especially if they are sick with vomiting, diarrhea or jaundice.

### ★ Step 2: Be informed about government and industry pandemic preparedness activities and planning.

- Utilize information provided to you by industry resources such as the National Restaurant Association Web site.
- Be familiar with your state and local pandemic plans and maintain contact with the appropriate officials.
- Monitor news and developments coming out of the federal government on pandemic preparedness — their primary Web sites are:
  - [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
  - [www.cdc.gov/flu/avian](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian)

### ★ Step 3: Communicate openly and proactively with your employees now and throughout a crisis.

- Educate your workforce about the threat of pandemic flu, what you are doing to prepare the business, and what they should do to protect themselves and their families. Information is available at [www.restaurant.org/avianflu](http://www.restaurant.org/avianflu)
- Evaluate your sick leave and family leave policies now and communicate what you will expect during a pandemic.
- After determining who are “essential employees” (Step 5), decide what changes or new policies are required and communicate them clearly.
- Update your employee contact system (whether it is a phone tree, e-mail or other

system) and be sure to have a plan in place to reach employees quickly whether they're at home, traveling or in the building where they work.

### ★ Step 4: Develop an internal pandemic planning task force that includes a representative from each key functional area of your business and review the following government-supplied checklist.

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines — [www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/business/checklist.html](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/business/checklist.html)

If you have a business continuity/preparedness department, engage them to expand their mission to include pandemic planning.

### ★ Step 5: Identify your company's essential functions and the necessary employees to perform them. Take into account likely shifts in demand for your products during a pandemic. Also take care to establish what functions are truly essential in order to build a meaningful list of employees that are critical to business continuity.

### ★ Step 6: Determine what outside activities are critical to your business and evaluate what your business can do to maintain normal functioning. For instance, when there are interruptions in the supply chain or transportation systems, how will that affect your business? Be sure to consider:

- what reserve supplies might be necessary to stockpile (e.g., cleaning supplies, gloves or other protective equipment, “to-go” containers, etc.).
- possible interruptions of essential government services, such as water or power, which might force restaurant closure.
- if you have open lines of communication with your key vendors and suppliers to plan collaboratively for the long term and explore contingencies to get the supplies and services you need to continue to operate. Consider modifying existing contracts to protect your interests.

### ★ Step 7: Build in training redundancy to prepare for inevitable absenteeism. Consider that not only sick employees will stay home.

Others might need to care for the sick or for children if schools close; quarantine situations might arise; and some may stay home for fear of contracting the flu. Experts expect absentee rates of 25 percent to 30 percent.

### ★ Step 8: Establish and maintain an open dialogue with the local communities where you operate.

- Determine which officials will be making decisions about foodservice, transportation and other essential services on a local level, and maintain an up-to-date contact list.
- Reach out to leaders in your local communities to make them aware of your planning activities and ways that you can work together in the face of a pandemic. Keep in mind that foodservice for makeshift hospitals and the community at large will be an issue that is best planned for in advance.

### ★ Step 9: Consider ways to minimize loss of revenue during times of “social distancing,” such as:

- menu modifications to respond to customer concerns or item shortages.
- increasing “takeout” availability and promotion, including curbside delivery.
- determine whether a delivery offering is possible or ways to increase capacity.
- methods and the infrastructure needed for remote ordering — fax, e-mail, phone, Web orders.

### ★ Step 10: Try to allow for employees to work remotely when possible. While this is not possible for most restaurant employees, evaluate and establish policies and tools in advance that will allow employees with administrative or financial work responsibilities to do so from home. Be sure to consider the hardware needed and the possible stresses that might put on your existing computer network.