

# Risk Management Guidelines

---

## Business Continuity Management – Pandemic Planning

### Introduction

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is now recognised as good business practice and many organisations have BCM systems and plans in place to address the unexpected. In truth, the majority have Business Continuity Plans (BCP) that are built around the premise that, if there were to be denial of access to, or use of, a facility, recovery would be achieved by transfer of key operations to another location. These plans usually assume that the same people would be available to undertake the business-critical activities.

This is unlikely to be the case in the event of a pandemic. A different thought process needs to be applied as the nature of such events are likely to be that, whilst your premises may be unaffected, a proportion of your (key?) employees would not be available.

- There is every possibility that your current choice of recovery route, whether it involves your own, or external personnel, may be affected at the same time.
- There is the possibility of your sites being affected more than once.
- There is the potential effect of a pandemic upon your supply chain, upon logistics, travel and utilities.
- There are the effects beyond your premises – government decisions, suppliers and transport issues as examples.

For all these reasons, you need to re-assess your current BCM programme to ensure that your resilience and recovery arrangements address the particular impact that a pandemic would have upon your organisation.

As will be recognised, a number of the measures referred to should have been addressed as part of a wider BCM programme, but bear repeating, in view of their importance.

These Risk Management Guidelines offer you headline advice; more detailed guidance is available from a number of sources, the main ones of which are listed at the end of this document. The particular elements are:

1. Identify a pandemic co-ordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning
2. Establish and maintain links to sources of up-to-date and reliable pandemic information. See end of these guidelines.
3. Identify and evaluate the continuity and recovery priorities of your 'top ten' products / services and customers in the lead up to, during, and in the aftermath of, a pandemic. Consider also the likelihood of increase or decrease in demand for some or all of your products and/or services.

# Risk Management Guidelines

---

4. Identify and evaluate the continuity and recovery priorities of critical operational and support processes and activities in the lead up to, during, and in the aftermath of, a pandemic. Consider also the likelihood of increase or decrease in demand for some or all of your products and or services.
5. Identify critical requirements for continuity of operations. Examples: utilities, services, components, materials, product and consumables suppliers and contractors and logistics companies.
6. Identify key employees. Establish policies for flexible working e.g. homeworking, flex-time.
7. Where home or other remote working is a chosen strategy, you should ensure that the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure would support this.
8. Ensure that cross-skill training and succession management programmes are current.
9. Prepare and validate continuity strategies.
10. Formally address and maintain proposals on the use of external contractors and agency staff, where such would be a feasible option.
11. Establish and maintain an emergency communication system. Examples: response team members, employees, suppliers, customers, other key stakeholders, and sources of advice & assistance.
12. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your employees. Consider a high proportion of employee absence during a pandemic, for reasons beyond personal illness, such as 'well-but-worried', family member illness, school and/or public transport closures.
13. Review your absence-management policies to ensure that they would be suitable for a pandemic. Make employees aware of any changes.
14. Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and need for face-to-face contact among employees and between employees and customers. Examples: establish 'homeworking' capabilities, reduce need for business travel, reduce internal and external business meetings – establish video-conferencing facilities.
15. Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the work-site. (It is estimated that virus affected droplets from coughs and sneezes remain viable for up to 24 hours on hard surfaces, such as table-tops and telephone hand-sets, and for up to 30 minutes on soft materials such as clothing). Examples: promote respiratory hygiene, improve cleaning regimes and prompt exclusion of people with influenza-like symptoms.
16. Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas, both home and overseas.

# Risk Management Guidelines

---

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>17. Establish guidance for employees returning from affected areas, including from holidays.</p> <p>18. Establish responsibilities and authorities, triggers and procedures for invoking the response plan.</p> <p>19. Allocate resources to protect your employees and customers during a pandemic. Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies in all of your locations. Examples: hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal.</p> <p>20. Communicate with and educate your employees and disseminate information about your pandemic preparedness and response plan.</p> <p>21. Develop and disseminate information on pandemic fundamentals. Examples: signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission, personal and family protection.</p> | <p>22. Develop means and allocate responsibilities for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, suppliers and customers in a consistent and timely manner. Consider website messages, an 'incident hotline' etc.</p> <p>23. Establish a collaborative relationship with local authorities &amp; public health agencies and emergency responders; share your pandemic plans and understand their responsibilities, likely capabilities and plans.</p> <p>24. Share best practices with other organisations in your neighbourhood and wider community such as Chambers of Commerce.</p> <p>25. Develop and implement test / exercise and review / maintenance programmes for your plan.</p> |
|---|--|

## Further Information

World Health Organisation website

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/pandemic/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/pandemic/en/index.html)

UK Government websites

<http://www.ukresilience.info/emergencies/health.shtm>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/default.htm>

USA Government website

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>



# Risk Management Guidelines

---

**These and other Risk Management Guidelines addressing a wide variety of risk control issues are freely available from:**

**<http://www.managerisk.rsagroup.co.uk>**

**The information set out in this document constitutes a set of general guidelines and should not be construed or relied upon as specialist advice. Therefore RSA accepts no responsibility towards any person relying upon these Risk Management Guidelines nor accepts any liability whatsoever for the accuracy of data supplied by another party or the consequences of reliance upon it.**