## Pandemic Preparedness

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of the pandemic preparedness plan is to minimize any negative impacts to company operations attributed to loss of staff through illness.

1. **Objective**

The principal objective of the pandemic preparedness plan is to develop, test and document a well-structured plan which will help the company recover as quickly and effectively as possible from a disease outbreak which could reduce available staff needed to support the firm’s business operations and information systems.

1. **Response Plan Coordinator**

The safety manager has been appointed as the pandemic response plan coordinator.

It is the duty of the Coordinator to:

* Monitor issues and information related to pandemics to keep the written plan up to date.
* Conduct employee training on preventing illness and the pandemic preparedness plan.
* Communicate with public health agencies, emergency responders and others regarding our plan, and understand their capabilities should an outbreak occur.
* Keep employees informed of developments as they occur, including those employees who remain at home.
* Maintain a list of employee home e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.
* Provide employees with telephone numbers to call to receive recorded messages and update pages on the website for employees.
* Attend external training/seminars about pandemic influenza outbreaks in order to remain current about the pandemic threat in our community.
* Maintain a list of contacts in the health profession to provide consultation and advice regarding this plan and its implementation.
* Maintain a list of duties and positions for which individual employees are cross-trained within the bank. Should staffing levels drop due to an outbreak, supervisors can use this list to fill in positions where needed.
* Maintain a list of duties that employees can perform from home, as well as any equipment (such as computers) that may be necessary to perform those duties. Supervisors can then draw on this list to have those duties performed by employees from home should it become necessary.
* The Coordinator and the Information Technology Director will ensure that the agency has sufficient IT infrastructures to support employee telecommuting and remote access to agency services.

The Coordinator and the Human Resource Director will establish the following policies and procedures:

* Flexible work hours, including staggered work hours and telecommuting.
* Restrict employee travel to affected areas.
* Guidance for employees returning to the United States from affected areas.
* Special procedures/accommodations for employees and customers with special needs or disabilities.
* Encourage employees to stay at home when they are ill or having to care for ill family members without fear of reprisal.

1. **Pandemic Response Team (PRT)**

The Pandemic Response Team is designated to assist the pandemic response plan coordinator. The PRT shall consist of at least one person from each department. It is the duty of the PRT to:

* Identify and communicate to the Coordinator which employees, vendors, suppliers and systems are essential to maintaining operations at their locations.
* Identify and communicate to the Coordinator the names of possible ancillary employees who could perform certain job duties in the case of a pandemic (e.g. consultants, temporary work services, retired employees).
* Develop and communicate to the Coordinator an emergency communications plan for their departments/locations, including identification of key personnel, vendors, and customers.
* Develop and submit a business continuity plan to continue operations at their locations with the least possible number of staff to be used in the event a large percentage of absenteeism should occur.
* Ensure that all employees in their departments are adequately trained on emergency procedures in the case of a pandemic and in the prevention of illness.
* Encourage all employees to be vaccinated annually for influenza. Time off of work shall be granted to obtain the vaccine(s).
* Assist the Coordinator in the implementation of this plan, if necessary, at their locations.
* Encourage all employees to use hand sanitizer and to wash hands consistently.
* Provide hand washing facilities, hand sanitizers, tissues, no touch trash cans, hand soap and disposable towels to employees.

1. **Pandemic Response Procedure**

Key issues that would lead to activation of the pandemic plan are:

* Escalating loss of staff due to illness.
* Inability to adequately handle business operations.

When a pandemic outbreak begins affecting company employees and business operations, the Pandemic Response Team (PRT) must be activated. The PRT will then decide the extent to which the pandemic plan must be invoked.

* The Coordinator, with the assistance of team members, will monitor staffing levels at all locations and assist supervisors in finding ways to maintain critical operations in light of any staffing shortage.
* The Coordinator is to implement the employee contact plan to ensure that all employees are kept informed of developments as they occur, including employees who remain at home.
* The PRT shall track the status of employees and business functions.
* Should an office be closed, notices shall be posted prominently at the location informing customers of the situation and telling them where and how they can transact business.
* Telephone and other lines of communication must be routed to a location where they will be staffed by employees so customers’ attempts to reach us do not go unanswered.
* Employees with job duties that can be accomplished by telecommuting will be encouraged to work from home unless they have been cross-trained to work in place of an employee who is ill.
* The emergency sick leave policy shall be implemented. Supervisors will be instructed to send and keep employees home if they exhibit symptoms of the illness, working from home if practical.
* Team members will contact their key contacts of customers and suppliers to determine the impact of the outbreak on their operations and its effects on our ability to perform our daily functions, and they will communicate the results to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will see to it that we obtain extra quantities of any necessary supplies that may be threatened due to the outbreak. Customers and suppliers will be notified once operations resume.
* Clean and disinfect all work surfaces that have frequent hand contact such as desktops, keyboards, lunch tables doorknobs, faucets and handrails routinely and when visibly soiled.
* Large or crowded gatherings of personnel shall be limited when possible if an outbreak or increased level of disease is in progress.
* Social distancing and increasing the space between employee work areas shall also be practiced when necessary.

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1. **Pandemic Plan Testing**

An annual test of the pandemic plan shall be conducted annually through table top exercises. The review team consists of members of the pandemic response team, human resources and emergency response. The team shall review and discuss the following during the table top exercise:

* Healthcare and preventive measures that are in place and those that may need to be added.
* Impacts on company facilities and key business functions. Who currently supports them and who can back them up if they are unavailable?
* Discuss efforts to provide cross-training to employees who may be designated as backups.
* Discuss succession planning to minimize any leadership gaps.
* Discuss communications activities, both internal and external, that ensure employees have all relevant information about the pandemic and key external organizations know how the company is responding.
* Identify where additional support, training, resources and funding are needed; secure these resources.
* Update plan documentation as needed.
* Schedule follow-up tests.

1. **Training**

Training shall be provided annually to all employees on the pandemic preparedness plan and illness and health issues. All training material will be translated to non-English speaking employees or employees with disabilities so that the content is understood. Training shall consist of the following:

* Illness prevention
* Initial disease symptoms
* Preventing the spread of the disease
* When it’s appropriate to return to work after illness
* Disease containment plans and expectations

**8. Corrective Actions**

Lessons learned following a pandemic event shall be documented and communicated to all employees. Lessons learned shall result in the development and tracking of corrective actions and shall include a review of all similar operations. Recommendations for corrective actions should be based on factors that have contributed to the pandemic event.

Corrective actions associated with lessons learned should be evaluated for impact and budgetary concerns, prioritized, and tracked to completion. Implementation of detailed corrective action may require multiple milestones. After final completion of any actions, the appropriate organization should verify that the original problems were appropriately addressed.