

Pandemic Flu Tabletop Exercise

<<Organization Name>>

<<Date>>

Exercise Agenda

- Introduction & overview
- Video “Business Not As Usual”
- Scenario and messaging with player response to follow
- Break
- Debrief

What is a Tabletop Exercise?

- Informal discussion using a scripted disaster scenario as a catalyst
- No time pressures, designed to promote free and open exchange of ideas
- Familiarizes players with roles, responsibilities, functions, plans, and procedures
- Identify issues requiring further work

Exercise Play

1. Introductory narrative, followed by “problem statements” and subsequent updates
2. Put yourself in the position described in the scenario
3. When asked, describe your actions as if this were “real,” following organizational plans and procedures
4. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers
5. Identification of issues, but not necessarily trying to solve them

Procedural Notes

- ❖ **Parking Lot:** as you come up with things that need further action as an organization, write them on a Post-It sticky note, hand to the facilitator and he/she will place it in the “parking lot”.
- ❖ **Your Specific Department:** make notes of things you want to follow up on later with your department leadership and/or colleagues.

Critical/Essential Services & Functions

List services and administrative functions that the agency currently performs and you would need to keep going during an emergency.

Exercise Objectives

1. Assess ability to use Incident Command System (ICS) to maintain critical and essential services.
2. Determine ability of <<organization name>> to handle an increase of demand of clients with reduced staffing.
3. Determine impact of social distancing & infection control measures on <<organization name>> operations.

Assumptions

- ❖ An increase in demand for <<organization>> services is predicted during an emergency
- ❖ Some key decision makers could be out ill or home with sick family
- ❖ Our community, including law enforcement, medical services, schools, stores, food banks, shelters, vendors, etc., will be impacted in the same ways <<organization>> is impacted

Pandemic Flu Facts

Influenza viruses cause infections of the respiratory tract (breathing tubes and lungs).

- In some persons, complications of influenza can be severe, including pneumonia.

Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak of disease from a new influenza A virus that is unlike past influenza viruses.

- Because people have not been infected with a similar virus in the past, most or all people will not have any natural immunity to a new pandemic virus.

Pandemic Flu Facts

A pandemic flu is a new influenza virus that could be a much more serious flu virus than seen in a typical flu season. Different from the typical strains of flu, humans would have no or little natural resistance to a new strain of influenza.

- Pandemic flu is likely to be more severe, affect more people, and cause more deaths than seasonal influenza.

There is no vaccine available at this time for a pandemic flu, and it is expected to take at least six months after a pandemic flu appears to develop a vaccine.

Pandemic Flu Facts

Once a pandemic virus develops, it can spread rapidly causing outbreaks around the world. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts that as much as 25% to 30% of the US population could be affected.

In King County alone, a severe pandemic flu could make 540,000 people ill, 270,000 would need outpatient care, over 59,000 would need hospitalization, and 11,500 could die.

Video:

“Business Not As Usual”

Situation Update #1

September 16



- Rapid human to human transmission of H5N1 is occurring worldwide
- Hundreds of confirmed cases in United States
- CDC advises state local health agencies to implement community containment plans where local cases are suspected and be ready to implement local measures to limit the spread of the disease.

NOTE: There are no confirmed cases in Washington State at this point.

Situation Update #1

September 16

- ❖ Nationwide: 30-40% of the workforce unable or unwilling to report to work.
- ❖ CDC and Public Health anticipate an extended pandemic, lasting at least 18 months.
- ❖ CDC and Public Health ask that anyone who is feeling ill or has symptoms of flu to stay at home.

Situation #1

Message One

30% of staff <<organization or department>> have been out with flu-like symptoms for several days and unable to work.

Remaining staff are calling to voice concern about coming in due to fear of exposure to the flu.

There has been a 40% increase in the demand for <<organization or department>> services.

Situation #1

Questions

At this time, what decisions are being made about essential services and administrative functions?

Is there a need to change your normal operating practices? (i.e. increase or decrease hours of operations, decrease or increase types of services offered)

Is there currently an operational level plan in place to address reduced staffing?

Situation #1

Questions

Incident Commander: What activities, events, services are happening now that your organization needs to respond to? How will you ensure reliable and timely communication happens between you and your ICS staff?

Safety Officer: What concerns do you have at this point? Are there protective measures that can be provided to the staff – gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, etc?

Public Information Officer (PIO): What is important to communicate to staff? To your clients? The community?

Situation #1

Questions

Planning Chief: What activities, events, services are coming up in the next few days and weeks that you will need to respond to? What resources (people and things) do you need the logistics section to begin acquiring?

Logistics Chief: How will you go about acquiring those items? What if your usual vendors are unable to fulfill orders and requests for services?

Finance Chief: How will sick leave be tracked? How will you track expenses related to the flu response?

What other ICS roles have input to give at this point from their role perspective?

Situation Update #2

October 16, 2008

(1 month after initial reports of flu)



Hundreds of cases of flu have been confirmed in King County.

55 influenza-associated deaths reported by the Medical Examiner's Office.

Situation Update #2

October 16

(1 month after initial reports of flu)

Social distancing order in place – 6 feet.

All schools/universities are closed and most daycare centers.

Churches are asked not to hold services, public gatherings are curtailed (movies, restaurants, weddings, funerals, sporting events, etc.)

Situation #2

Message One

Executive Director/CEO is out with the flu and unable to work.

Chief Operating Officer is sick and unable to work.

Most staff with children have called in saying they need to stay home due to not having any childcare options.

Situation #2

Questions

What role will the Board of Trustees take in this situation?

What are some of the first actions taken at this point?

Who is able to make decisions for the organization?

How will social distancing impact operations?

Situation #2

Questions

What should the response be for those refusing to come to work? Is there a telecommuting policy in place?

Can children be brought into work? If so, who will supervise them and ensure social distancing is being followed?

Who will sign payroll, billing and accounts payable if key leadership is unable to work?

Situation #2

Message Two



Demand for <<organization>> services is up 80%

Media requests for information are coming daily from local newspapers, KING, KOMO and Q-13 television.

Situation #2

Questions



Are there any services/functions that need to be reduced?

What types of staff or volunteers do you need?

Are staff cross-trained to fill multiple roles?

Public Information Officer: How will media requests be handled?

Situation Update #3

October 28, 2008

(6 weeks after initial flu reports)



It is estimated that over 100,000 people have died from the flu in the U.S. – over 1,000 in King County.

Health system overwhelmed

Metro & Sound Transit operating at a drastically reduced capacity due to staff shortages.

Situation Update #3

October 28

(6 weeks after initial flu reports)



Perishable food items are unavailable in markets

Some businesses close due to lack of income

Many have been weeks without paychecks

High public frustration with social distancing

Situation #3

Message one

Executive Director/CEO is back to work and is now immune from the virus.

40% of Supervisors and Managers are out sick.

Staff on duty are showing signs of stress, fear and frustration.

Situation #3

Questions

How will loss of key staff positions be handled?

How will staff stress be addressed?

Situation #3

Message Two

Funders are calling to find out what <<organization>> is doing to ensure services continue.

A false rumor has started that the organization is having financial difficulties and staff pay may have to be reduced. Staff are threatening to walk out.

Situation #3

Questions

Who will be responsible for talking with the funders and what will the message be?

How will the staff be communicated to regarding the rumor? What will the message be?

Final Update & Message

November 11

(8 weeks after initial flu reports)

Social distancing & infection control measures are working to contain spread.

Most staff are recovered and returning to work, but 1 staff person has died.

Although the first “wave” of illness is subsiding, it is expected that a second “wave”, though less severe, will happen in the next 2-6 weeks.

Final Update Questions

How is your organization preparing for people to come back to work after being out?

What actions can be taken to help staff readjust?

How will you accommodate staff who worked throughout the last 8 weeks are now requesting time off?

Final Update Questions

How will you continue to enforce infection control measures (i.e. frequent hand washing, hand sanitizer, cough into arm, etc.)?

What plans are you making to prepare for the next wave of illness?

Once a vaccine is available to the public, will you require staff to receive it? What happens if staff members refuse to be vaccinated?

Debrief

Debrief

What were the benefits to working under ICS? What were the challenges?

What were some significant issues that came out of exercise?

What issues came up that you did not expect?

What questions/issues came up that you'll want to discuss with your employees?

What are things you want to follow up on within your department? Revisit post-it notes/"parking lot issues".

What follow up would you like for the agency to do?