

What's it all about?



Here is an assessment of the current situation. According to the experts, including Health Canada, a pandemic can occur when a new influenza virus emerges against which people have little or no immunity. There is no influenza pandemic at this time anywhere in the world. However, scientists do agree a global outbreak is inevitable.

To help Canadians at work and at home better understand Canada's preparedness, Health Canada has developed a web-based resource on pandemic influenza that provides access to a one-stop source of information on pandemic influenza and Canada's preparedness.

The website www.pandemicinfluenza.gc.ca brings together information from across the Government of Canada's departments and agencies, providing a central website for information on Canada's pandemic influenza plan and other public health measures to protect Canadians.

Acklands-Grainger, together with its supplier-partners, offers a number of products that can assist companies across Canada in their efforts to be "pandemic prepared."

The pandemic plan at Acklands-Grainger

In an effort to help ensure the safety and well-being of its employees and customers, Acklands-Grainger has developed a multifaceted flu pandemic response plan. This plan is currently being implemented throughout the organization. The goal is to minimize, to the extent possible, the impact of a pandemic on the overall business and our employees.

Various elements of the plan were created based on information from credible sources such as the World Health Organization, Centres for Disease Control and Health Canada.

The proactive stage of the plan involves preparing individuals and business processes for a potential pandemic. Specific actions include:

- A documented plan at each level of the organization which includes:
 - identification of critical systems, roles and personnel
 - implementation of back-up plans for the above
 - identification of those people who can work from home
 - required departmental records and their locations

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- names and contact numbers for each person
- names and contact numbers for critical suppliers and customers.
- Identifying and ordering, where available, certain products that may be in higher demand from our customers as they prepare and respond to a pandemic.
- Establishing communication vehicles to keep employees updated.
- Developing educational resources to help employees and their families be prepared.
- Creating specific policies and actions that will be implemented should the need arise; e.g., travel policy, time off policy, etc.
- Establishing pre-arranged communication meetings to maintain information flow.
- Creating checklists and tools to assist managers.

The reactive stage of the plan involves managing the business through this anticipated turbulent event. The management team will analyze the current situation in each area of the business on a daily basis, use the established checklists and templates and make decisions accordingly, enacting the various policies and plans as the situation warrants.

By establishing contingency plans, educating our people, having specific policies and communicating with our stakeholders before a pandemic event, Acklands-Grainger believes it has a good flu pandemic response plan.

According to Frank O'Rourke, Acklands-Grainger's Director of Environment, Health and Safety, "By improving the readiness of our employees and our business, we'll be in a better position to assist our customers with their own preparedness and response needs." □