

Emergency Preparedness in the Workplace *Checklist*

Does your organization have an emergency preparedness plan that will guide the business, staff and clients through an emergency situation or interruption in regular business?



[Business Continuity Planning](#) or emergency

preparedness planning sets out a process by which emergency situations are managed, so as to minimize the impact on the business. A business continuity plan is a smart investment that no organization can afford to be without.

The City of Ottawa has information about [Emergency Preparedness for Ottawa Business Owners](#) on its Web site, and training workshops that will help make sure everyone in your organization knows what to do in the event of an emergency. It's important to know what to do initially, but also how to handle the longer-term issues that may arise.

Traditionally, business continuity planning has focused on natural disasters and accidents that impact the workplace; however, biological threats such as pandemic influenza can seriously impact your workforce, as well as your facility. Ontario businesses learned a great deal from the SARS outbreak in 2003, and now the threat of a global influenza pandemic is very real. The need to minimize the effects of a pandemic on human resources requires businesses to plan ahead and to implement strategies that will diminish the risk of transmission of the virus.

➔ **Are you ready?** This checklist can be used to guide you through the process of preparing your business, staff and clients for [Pandemic Influenza](#), as well as other emergencies.

➔ **Consider the following steps to help your organization get started:**

- 1) **Assess the potential risks**
- 2) **Protect critical functions**
- 3) **Identify the chain of command**
- 4) **Develop an emergency response plan**

If you need planning assistance that is specific to your type of business, contact the [Health and Safety Association](#) for your industry sector.

1) What are the most likely threats to your business?	Yes	No
Severe weather/Natural disasters (ice storms, earthquakes, floods)?		
Communicable disease outbreaks (SARS, pandemic influenza)?		
Interruption of essential services (power, water, mail, public transit, communications)?		
Damage to facilities (fire, water damage)?		
Computer failures (loss of data, cyber-attacks)?		
Labour issues (strikes, unsafe work environments, violence)?		
Proximity to railways & freeways (chemical spills, dangerous goods)?		
Terrorism (anthrax, explosive devices)?		
Radiological/Nuclear hazards (exposures, reactor incidents)?		

2) What functions or services are critical to maintaining your business?	Yes	No
Have you prioritized functions that are critical to the continuation of your business?		
Are there other ways of maintaining those functions in the event of a loss of key people, facilities, tools or technology?		
Have you identified key partnerships upon which your business depends e.g. shipping services, technology support, supply of raw materials etc.?		
Does your workplace have effective health and safety programs?		

3) What is the chain of command in the event of an emergency?	Yes	No
Have you identified the person in charge of emergency preparedness and a back-up person? Who implements, maintains and oversees the plan?		
Have you outlined a chain of command with alternates and communicated this clearly to your staff?		
Have you considered how staff will be notified of an emergency and created a contact plan?		
Do you have an employee emergency info-line where employees can access information quickly, such as whether or not they should come to work that day?		
Have you considered cross training staff, especially for critical business, emergency, and health and safety functions?		

4) What is the emergency response plan for your business?	Yes	No
Have you created an emergency response plan? If half of your employees were affected by a serious communicable disease how would your business continue to function?		
Does your emergency plan include initial response but also address longer-term issues that may arise?		
Is there a regular review process to ensure that the plan remains current?		
Are employees familiar with the plan?		
Have there been practice sessions to identify possible gaps in the plan?		
Is your plan effective for all types of emergencies e.g. natural disaster, communicable disease, loss of essential services or technology?		

➔ Comprehensive emergency preparedness planning encompasses four general aspects of a business that need to be considered:

- 1) PEOPLE
- 2) KEY BUSINESS FUNCTIONS
- 3) TECHNOLOGY
- 4) FACILITIES

➔ Consider the following questions and how they relate to your business:

1) PEOPLE	Yes	No
<p>Does your organization’s emergency preparedness plan provide for public health emergencies such as SARS or pandemic influenza? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Canada Pandemic Influenza • Public Health Agency of Canada • Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care • Ottawa Public Health 		
<p>Does your benefit plan pay for sick time? Do you encourage staff to stay home or work from home when they are sick? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources & Skills Development Canada – Employment Insurance Information for Employers • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario – Reporting an Injury/Disease • Ontario Ministry of Labour – Emergency Leave • Ontario Ministry of Labour – Family Medical Leave 		
<p>If some of your employees were ordered to be under quarantine, could they work from home? What are their rights? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Justice Canada – Quarantine Act • Public Health Agency of Canada – Quarantine, Travel Medicine and Migration Health Program • Ontario Ministry of Labour – Workplace Laws and SARS 		
<p>Are counselling services provided for employees and their families to promote healthy coping strategies, combat posttraumatic stress, and allow for constructive debriefing from a crisis? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – What is EAP? • Canadian Mental Health Association – Counselling and Support • City of Ottawa – Getting Back on Track After an Emergency 		
<p>Are there provisions in the plan to ensure the safety and security of the families of your employees? Employees need to know that their families are secure if they are to be expected to function in emergency situations. For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Ottawa – Residents: The City of Ottawa is ready. Are you? 		

1) PEOPLE cont.	Yes	No
<p>Have you considered the unique needs of different cultural groups in the workplace in emergency situations? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Ottawa – PDF documents in several languages • Multicultural Health Coalition – scroll down to read description 		
<p>Are employees encouraged to create their own emergency preparedness plans for their home and family? For example if the schools closed due to a public emergency what alternate childcare arrangements have been made? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa-Carleton School Board – PR.506.SCO Emergency School Evacuations/School Closings 		
<p>If a staff member develops a communicable disease, are the other employees entitled to know about it? How do you protect the privacy of your employees while also protecting the safety of your staff and clients? Employers are required to provide written notice of occupational illness to the Ontario Ministry of Labour.</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Bill 31: Health Information Protection Act, 2004 • Ontario Ministry of Labour – Workplace Laws and SARS • City of Ottawa – Personal Health Information Protection Act 		
<p>Does your company have a hand-hygiene policy? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety • Ottawa Public Health – Hand Hygiene <p>To download posters for your workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa Public Health – Hand Washing • Ottawa Public Health – Hand Sanitizing 		
<p>Does your business have a first aid kit that is readily accessible and personnel that are trained in first aid? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace Safety & Insurance Board of Ontario – First Aid Requirements • City of Ottawa – Emergency First Aid Kit Checklist for Businesses 		
<p>Does your organization offer flu vaccination clinics each year and actively encourage staff to participate? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Influenza immunization multilingual fact sheets • Ottawa Public Health – How to Organize a Workplace Flu Immunization Clinic 		
<p>Do you have an evacuation plan? Is it practised and reviewed on a regular basis?</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Prevention Canada – Fire Escape Planning • City of Ottawa – Fire 		

2) KEY BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	Yes	No
Does your business insurance policy have business interruption coverage? If so, does it cover lost profit or just overhead?		
Does your business have a clear succession plan? If key people died in an emergency, who would take their places?		
Have you considered the use of teleconferencing or video conferencing in place of face-to-face meetings in the event of an emergency? Can you hold a couple of meetings per year in this format as a means of practice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information, talk to your phone system provider. 		
Could payroll be managed if key people or technology were unavailable?		
Have essential corporate documents been identified and protected? For more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Ottawa – Essential Corporate Documents and Records Kit Checklist 		

3) TECHNOLOGY	Yes	No
Have you backed up your data offsite? Check with your Information Technology (IT) department about safeguarding your data. For more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canadian Federation of Independent Business – Guide to simplifying technology for business 		
Is your computer network secure with updated antivirus software, firewalls, privacy protection for staff and clients etc.? Check with your IT department to ensure that security is continuously updated. For more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Institute of Standards and Technology – NIST’s Security Configuration Checklists Program for IT Products 		
Do you have back-up copies of client and staff contact information in an alternate location? Is the information protected in terms of privacy regulations etc.?		
Have you trained staff in the proper and safe use of machinery, personal protective equipment and hazardous products to prevent emergency situations from occurring? Have pollutants been released into the natural environment? For more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Workplace Gateway – Industry Groups Ontario Ministry of the Environment – Reporting Spills and Environmental Emergencies 		

4) FACILITIES	Yes	No
<p>Does your business maintain an alternate site where business can quickly be resumed if the primary site were unexpectedly unavailable? If so, is this site within the same city or would employees have to temporarily relocate? If employees are expected to relocate to this site, have you considered their families?</p>		
<p>Does your business routinely review fire code regulations to be sure that equipment and evacuation plans are current? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of The Fire Marshal – The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and the Ontario Fire Code • City of Ottawa – Prevention and Education 		
<p>Does your business routinely update its insurance policies?</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance Bureau of Canada – Business & Commercial Insurance 		
<p>Have you considered the security of the physical work environment?</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa Police Service – Business Crime Prevention 		
<p>Are hand-hygiene stations or facilities easily accessible to staff and clients?</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Legal Information Institute – Building Code Section 3.8.3 Design Standards – Subsection 3.8.3.11 Lavatories 		
<p>Are employee workspaces, break rooms and washroom facilities regularly cleaned and disinfected?</p> <p>To download a fact sheet on how to disinfect work surfaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa Public Health – Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection 		
<p>Does your business run regular maintenance checks, and service or repair air filtration systems, plumbing, water leaks, etc. as needed? Do you keep accurate records of these repairs and maintenance activities?</p>		
<p>Does your business maintain and routinely check a general-purpose emergency preparedness kit? For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Ottawa – Emergency Preparedness Kit Checklist for Businesses 		

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