



# Influenza A (H1N1)

(Formerly known as Swine Flu)

## Frequently Asked Questions

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The information in this document was collected from a variety of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, and PandemicFlu.gov in addition to Deloitte’s experience assisting our customers with pandemic planning. This document is not meant to provide medical or legal advice and may not address all situations as the Influenza A (H1N1) situation changes over time.

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## 1. What should my organization's response be for a pandemic such as the current outbreak of the Influenza A H1N1 (swine flu)?

First, it may be appropriate to send an internal communication to all staff acknowledging that senior leadership is monitoring the situation and will be keeping apprised of the situation. Senior leadership should determine what actions are necessary given the current situation. This may include any or all of the following:

## 2. When should my organization activate crisis management protocols?

It is at the discretion of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and senior leadership on whether the crisis management should be activated in response to a pandemic. However, it is strongly suggested that the team activate and begin the crisis management process at the onset of the outbreak because pandemics can spread quickly making early preparation critical. The CMT should discuss, at the minimum, the actions outlined in the first question of this section: 'What should my organization's response be during a pandemic outbreak such as the current outbreak of the Influenza A H1N1 (swine flu)?'

### **3. When should my organization make a press release or external communication?**

All external communications should be created and distributed in conjunction with the organization's corporate communications policies. It is at the discretion of the organization whether any external communication is warranted. If the pandemic is impacting the organization directly, external communications may be appropriate. Specific communications to key suppliers/vendors and or significant customers may also be warranted, to inform them of your current position as well as expectations.

### **4. Should my organization institute travel restrictions?**

Provided the CDC, the WHO, and relevant government organizations have not recommended or instituted travel restrictions, it is at the discretion of the organization to determine whether the travel is necessary given the potential risk. At the very least, travelers should be educated in the risks and the preventative measures and be encouraged to be cognizant of their health. Currently, travel to and from Mexico should be closely monitored. However, the situation remains very fluid and this watch area could expand quickly.

### **5. What should my organization's response be if an employee is diagnosed with the H1N1 flu?**

First, the organization should strongly consider allowing the person who developed influenza-like symptoms to self-isolate and work from home until a medical professional indicates that the person is ready to return to work. Your organization's crisis management team should have procedures in place to track your employees, understand who may have been exposed, and take appropriate steps to first communicate the situation and risks to the affect parties and consider more significant actions such as the distribution of anti-viral medication if that is a component of your organization's pandemic plan.

### **6. If an employee's family member is diagnosed with the H1N1 flu, what should my organization do?**

If an employee's family member is diagnosed, it is important that the organization do what it can to support the employee during their family member's illness. It is also important that the employee be educated on how to properly prevent themselves from being infected. Generally speaking, it is encouraged that any employee with an immediately family member affect by the virus remain at home and avoid any unnecessary outside contacts to help prevent the spread of the virus into the workplace or elsewhere.

## 7. Can I open an envelope or package that I received from Mexico or other infected regions?

We know that some viruses can live two hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. An envelope or package from an infected area generally takes much longer than two hours to arrive. As a preventative measure, you may wish to wash your hands after handling the materials, or at a minimum utilize an alcohol-based anti-viral hand wash, as well as properly disposing of the packaging. .

## 8. How can we help employees be more effective working virtually?

Advanced planning is important to allow your employees to be as productive as possible while working virtually during a pandemic outbreak. Some planning tasks to consider include:

- Technology infrastructure to support remote work (e.g. network remote access facilities, laptops, corporate and end-user network bandwidth, security software, voice communications, voice and video conferencing tools)
- Digitizing critical records
- Identifying critical processes and documenting how they will be operated in a virtual environment
- Accommodations for employees with special needs
- Consideration of third parties such as contractors, vendors, partners
- Employee training
- Exercising and testing working virtually

## 9. How can we assure our customers that we are prepared for a pandemic flu?

Timely and accurate communications to customers is critical to building trust in your organization's reliability in the face of pandemics and other disruptions. Your customers should be a key component of your crisis management and external communications plans. Proactive, direct engagement with your top customers can also help reassure them that you consider meeting their needs as one of your key objectives.

## 10. How can we adapt our response to differing levels of pandemic threat?

Keeping abreast of the latest news and recommendations from the CDC, the WHO, and other government organizations will help you adjust your response as appropriate for current circumstances. This may call for you to ramp up your response or stand down your response. Proportional responses will help prevent panic from taking over and also help determine appropriate risk management measures. Proactive planning should consider a variety of potential future developments ranging from benign to catastrophic, so that the appropriate plans can be executed as needed with minimal improvisation. Specific HR policies, work from home mandates, and other tactical responses can be triggered in synch with the pandemic levels communicated by the WHO and local risk environment.

## 11. When should we make a call to close a facility?

The difficult decision to close a facility should be based upon the extent of the threat to the personnel working in and around the facility in question from either the general environment or facility specific events, such as a potential H1N1 flu case, and the impact to business operations, regulatory and legal requirements, customers, brand, and employees. Advice from public health and government agencies should be considered as part of the decision process. Total closure of a facility may not be necessary or practical, and partial closings and containment measures should be considered as well.

## 12. How can we calculate the possible financial impacts to our organization from a pandemic?

Life safety should be everyone's first considerations. However, from a financial perspective an organization must consider a range of scenarios based on several severities levels, waves and geographical realities of potential pandemics and include the following cost categories in your analysis:

Lost labor costs	Ruined / expired supplies costs	Planning costs
Replacement labor costs	Lost revenue opportunities	Response costs (e.g. supplies)
Alternate workaround costs	Lost customers	Clean-up costs
Lost rent (from facility shutdown)	HR benefits costs	
Idle equipment costs	Reputation costs	

## 13. How do I know if key vendors and suppliers will be there for us when the situation worsens?

Ideally, you will have redundant vendors and suppliers, and among each set of redundant vendors and suppliers, there should not be correlated risks. For instance, you should consider having suppliers from separate geographic regions, so that an outbreak in one region would still leave you a supplier from the other region. It is highly suggested that both domestic and international supplies exist in the event of a border closure.

If redundant suppliers have not been identified, an immediate project should be initiated to identify your critical suppliers, what the supply and where they originate the products and services from. This listing can be used to evaluate what options may exist for alternative supplies. An organization should also make sure that your critical vendors have a reasonable pandemic readiness plan and that you understand what course of action and timing you can expect from them as they also react to the changing environment.

## 14. How do we sustain momentum in improving organizational resilience post H1N1 flu?

Preparing for a pandemic, regardless of whether the current H1N1 flu continues to escalate is a wise investment in the protection of your most critical assets, YOUR PEOPLE. We recommend a comprehensive Business Continuity Management program be developed to protect all of your critical assets from a disaster event, whether pandemic driven or caused by a natural disaster or a man-made event, you must have adequate response plans and protection. Examining your organization for the most critical business processes, by way of a threat/risk assessment and business impact analysis will identify the most risky, time-sensitive, and impactful activities your organization undertakes on a daily basis. Within each process, one must examine the assets requiring protection using an appropriate methodology such as BETH3™. This methodology looks at **b**uildings (facilities/utilities/surroundings), **e**quipment, **t**echnology, **h**uman resources and **3<sup>rd</sup>** parties, to provide a complete picture of what is used to conduct each of your critical processes. This also provides the basis for your resiliency and business continuity strategies and plans.

## About Pandemic Readiness Services

For more information on Deloitte's Pandemic Readiness services please contact Deloitte's U.S. Leader for Business Continuity Management services, David Sarabacha at [dsarabacha@deloitte.com](mailto:dsarabacha@deloitte.com) or 503-308-2490.