



PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN

OCTOBER 2009



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Introduction and Purpose

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) created a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in 2003 to prepare for a disruption of services to its clients. Several events that could disrupt service were anticipated when the BCP was first developed.

The Pandemic Plan is an adaptation of the BCP that is specific to high staff absenteeism, or high absenteeism among care giver groups, for a prolonged period because of illness. The WCB will monitor staff absenteeism through a new process that captures the underlying reason for an employee's absence at the time it is reported to the WCB.

It should be noted that a pandemic is the widespread transmission of a communicable illness in several countries. It refers to the level of the virus' activity. It *does not* refer to the severity of the illness.

The purpose of this plan is to lower the WCB's risk of reduced service delivery due to a pandemic. The plan also helps the WCB to manage the economic impact a large-scale health threat can pose. Through the Pandemic Plan, the WCB intends to continue providing core services to its clients. Core services were identified by the WCB when its BCP was first developed.

Wherever appropriate, the WCB has consulted with authoritative sources and leading practitioners for assistance in the development of its Pandemic Plan, including:

- Saskatchewan Emergency Management Organization, Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
- The Regina and Saskatoon Health Regions
- Workplace Safety & Insurance Board, Ontario
- Canada Health

- Farm Credit Corporation
- Saskatchewan Association of Human Resource Professionals

Plan Overview

The organization uses this plan to coordinate the management of a pandemic's effects on service delivery and business operations. The WCB's Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is the basis of the Pandemic Plan and is the primary reference when deciding on core services and the deployment of WCB employees.

Pandemics present human resource management issues that could disrupt service delivery. The plan assumes a peak absenteeism rate of 50% with lower absentee levels in the weeks just before and just after the peak. Actual levels of absenteeism may be higher or lower. No one plan can anticipate all service and business impacts. The plan is flexible and will be adapted to suit needs. The primary human resource management goal is to staff core service areas with capable employees. The plan assumes operations continue in both WCB offices.

Core Services

Critical business units, functions and core service requirements have been identified by the management team and will be staffed as the situation warrants.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The structure that follows illustrates the WCB's decision making process and responsibilities during a pandemic.

Pandemic Coordinator

The WCB's Manager of Facilities is the Pandemic Coordinator.

- Assigns a Pandemic Committee; ensures all decisions of the Committee are carried out.
- Chairs meetings of the Pandemic Committee and conducts briefings with the WCB's CEO, Executive and other managers as needed.
- Ensures risks associated with the operational and management impacts of a pandemic are identified; assigns tasks as appropriate
- Liaises with other government agencies including the Saskatchewan Emergency Management Office, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, and other ministries and crown corporations and agencies to secure up-to-date information.
- Coordinates communication with the WCB's Chief Executive Officer, Director of Planning & Communications and members of the Pandemic Committee.
- Designated backup is the Director of Finance and Administration.



Chief Executive Officer and / or Executive Committee

- Decides service levels and scope of business operations during service disruptions.
- Keeps Board Members informed on implementation of the Pandemic Plan and the status of service delivery. Reports to the Board following updates from the Pandemic Coordinator.



WCB Directors and Managers

- Participate in planning for a potential pandemic.
- Identify critical areas of responsibility and associated risk in business operations that must be considered and communicate as appropriate.
- Ensure regular and on-going communication with staff on team.
- Notifies the Human Resources Department of absenteeism in staff complement.



Spokesperson

- Media relations are the responsibility of the Director of Planning & Communications, or designate.
- The Director of Planning & Communication (or designate) and/or the CEO (or designate) is the external spokesperson.
- The Director of Human Resources (or designate) and / or the Director of Planning & Communication (or designate) is the internal spokesperson. .

Response Phases

The Pandemic Plan's phases are triggered by levels of employee absenteeism and the most current information available from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.

The WCB's Executive Committee continually assesses the impact of absenteeism on operations and determines if and when to action a phase in its Pandemic Plan.

There are four phases to the WCB's plan. They are adaptable to changing circumstances within the WCB and the communities in Saskatchewan where its employees work. Key indicators like its own employee absenteeism and the severity of illness in Regina, Saskatoon and other communities are continually monitored to provide decision makers with current and authoritative information. Within each phase, consideration is given to how the pandemic is impacting governance of the Pandemic Plan, employee well-being, business operations, the WCB's offices and facilities, internal and external communication, and policies like employee travel.

The four phases and a brief description of the WCB's response to each phase are:

Response Phase One – Outside of Saskatchewan – Business as usual

Response Phase Two – Inside Saskatchewan – Awareness and accelerated preparation

Response Phase Three – Inside WCB Workplace(s) – Activate Response

Response Phase Four – Pandemic Subsides – Recover, Review, and Update Plan

**RESPONSE PHASE ONE
OUTSIDE OF SASKATCHEWAN

BUSINESS AS USUAL**

Definition: Infectious disease has been detected and is spreading outside of Saskatchewan.

1. Governance

- The Pandemic Coordinator will:
 - Keep current with information on the pandemic situation outside the province including the spread and severity of illness in Canada.
 - Establish contact with other government departments and organizations in the community to share information.
 - Call regular meetings with Directors of critical business units defined in the Business Continuity Plan and establish other meetings with key individuals within the WCB.
 - Provide regular updates to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive.
- The Pandemic Coordinator and the WCB's executive decision makers will review the Pandemic Plan and arrange for internal communications with WCB managers and employees, and with external stakeholders as appropriate.

2. Employee well-being

- The Pandemic Coordinator will
 - Work with Facilities staff to promote steps WCB employees can take to maintain wellness, such as personal hygiene measures.
 - Contact the Director of Planning & Communications to establish an internal communications plan that gives employees credible and relevant health-related information.

3. Business Operations

- Continue operations from Regina and Saskatoon locations.
- Identify critical business units and update contingency plans. Necessary changes are forwarded to the Pandemic Coordinator.
- The Planning & Communications Department works with business units to determine external communication needs.
- Managers identify implications to business processes that could impact clients.
- Managers identify critical suppliers and vendors and complete a risk assessment for each.

4. Facilities

- Purchase and distribute appropriate prevention related items, such as hand sanitizer, tissues, and antiseptic wipes.
- Ensure posters and information on how to prevent the spread of infectious disease is distributed and posted within Regina and Saskatoon offices.

5. Planning & Communications

- Update the internal and external communication plan. This includes a review of planned internal and external communications to clients, vendors, care givers, and the general public.
- Place relevant information on the corporate website and intranet for ease of access.

6. Human Resources Policies and Guidelines

- Ensure all relevant Human Resources policies and processes are reviewed and revised as necessary.

**RESPONSE PHASE TWO
INSIDE SASKATCHEWAN**

AWARENESS AND ACCELERATED PREPARATION

Definition: Cases of infectious disease have been detected inside Saskatchewan. Employee absenteeism rates appear normal.

1. Governance

- The Pandemic Coordinator will:
 - Continue to keep current on the pandemic situation and monitor the spread in Saskatchewan and outside of Canada.
 - Continue to work with other organizations and the government to share information and keep current.
 - Continue bi-weekly meetings of the Pandemic Committee. Provide updates to the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive.
 - Ensure contingency plans for all critical business units are reviewed. .

2. Employee well-being

- Pandemic Coordinator will:
 - Continue to work with Facilities staff to promote appropriate hygiene practices within the Regina and Saskatoon offices.
 - Continue to work with the Planning & Communication Department to provide updates and credible and relevant health-related information to employees.

3. Business Operations

- Continue operations from Regina and Saskatoon offices.

- Critical business units confirm that contingency plans are updated. Directors have identified and communicated to their respective Vice President and the Pandemic Coordinator.
- Directors identify any implications to business processes/ policies that may impact clients.

4. Facilities

- Continue to distribute prevention items like hand sanitizers, tissues, disinfecting wipes and ensure accessibility for employees.
- Ensure hand sanitizers and tissues are placed in meeting rooms and at reception areas.
- Update and/or expand distribution of posters.

5. Communications

- Continue to review the internal and external communications plans.
- Update information available on the corporate website and WCB employee intranet. Ensure information is from credible health related sources.

6. Corporate Human Resources related policies and guidelines

- Consider travel restrictions on out-of-province and in-province travel.
- Consider appropriate restrictions on meetings inside and outside the office.

**RESPONSE PHASE THREE
VIRUS RELATED ABSENTEEISM IN WCB OFFICES
ACTIVATE RESPONSE**

Definition: Absenteeism rates are impacting full service delivery.

1. Governance

- Pandemic Coordinator will:
 - Continue to keep current on pandemic related information and monitor the spread and severity of illness in Saskatchewan and Canada.
 - Meet twice daily with the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Planning & Communication to update and review the WCB's level of response.
 - Continue to work with other organizations and the government to share information and keep current;
 - Continue to call meetings of the Pandemic Committee. Provide daily updates to the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive.

2. Employee well-being

- Pandemic Coordinator will
 - Continue to work with Facilities staff to promote proper hygiene in the Regina and Saskatoon offices.
 - Continue to work with the Planning & Communications Department to provide employees with relevant and credible health-related updates.

3. Business Operations

- Managers identify service delivery issues and report accordingly to their Vice President and the Pandemic Coordinator.

- Work remotely where possible and appropriate.
- Close public reception areas.
- Suspend external and internal meetings until the virus subsides.
- Impose appropriate travel bans.

4. Facilities

- Ensure employees have access to hand sanitizer and/or disinfecting wipes.
- Ensure tissues are placed in meeting rooms.
- Review and update posted information in both offices.

5. Planning and Communications

- Place public service announcements and paid media and update information on the corporate website advising the general public of reduced services and the suspension of meetings until the virus subsides

6. Corporate Human Resources related policies and guidelines

- Redeploy WCB employees to core services.

**RESPONSE PHASE FOUR
PANDEMIC SUBSIDES
RECOVER, REVIEW AND UPDATE PLAN**

RECOVERY

Definition: Return to Normal Business Operations

1. Governance

- Pandemic Coordinator will:
 - Monitor and report when threat of infectious disease has ended and it is safe to resume regular business operations, or revert to Phase One or Phase Two if another pandemic wave is imminent.
 - Call a meeting of the Pandemic Committee to evaluate the Pandemic Plan and determine if changes are required; implement changes as necessary.

2. Employee well-being

- Evaluate employee well-being and respond as appropriate.

3. Business Operations

- Managers and business units assess opportunities to improve the Pandemic Plan; update plan accordingly.
- The travel ban is lifted.
- The ban on internal and external meetings is lifted

4. Facilities

- Return to normal business, or revert to Phase One or Phase Two if another pandemic wave is imminent.

5. Communications

- Place public service announcements and paid media, and update information on the corporate website, advising the general public that services have resumed

