

Preparing Your Business for Emergencies



Fairfax County Health Department
Business Survival Seminars
Summer 2009

Types of Emergencies

□ Infrastructure

- Usually solitary event
- Quick onset
- Short duration
- Primary impact on physical infrastructure
- Examples - flooding, hurricanes, tornados, fires, earthquake, terrorism

□ Biological

- Disease outbreak
 - Prolonged and/or widespread
 - Primary impact on human resources
 - Examples – SARS, influenza pandemic, bioterrorism
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H1N1 "swine flu" Pandemic

- ❑ Disease outbreaks of influenza occurring on every continent
 - ❑ Worldwide - 44,287 confirmed cases, including 146 deaths
 - ❑ U.S.A – 21,449 cases, 87 deaths
 - ❑ Virginia – 161 cases
 - ❑ Fairfax – 21 cases
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Current H1N1 Pandemic Update

- ❑ Virus appears to be more contagious than seasonal influenza
 - ❑ A younger age group has been affected than seen during seasonal influenza
 - ❑ Most cases seem to be mild and self-limited
 - ❑ Tendency to cause more severe and lethal infections in people with underlying medical conditions
 - ❑ Potential severity of virus remains uncertain
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History of Influenza Pandemics

- Three pandemics in the 20th century
 - 1918 (H1N1) – 40 million deaths
 - 1957 (H2N2) – 2 million deaths
 - 1968 (H3N2) – 700,000 deaths
 - Outbreaks tend to occur in two or three waves over a period of a year or more
 - Severity of subsequent waves can change
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Potential Impact of a Flu Pandemic

- ❑ Possibly as many as 35% of the population affected, with large numbers of deaths
 - ❑ Enormous demands on the health care system
 - ❑ Possible disruption in critical infrastructure due to high absenteeism and social distancing efforts
 - ❑ Delays in vaccine availability
 - ❑ Possible shortage of antiviral drugs
 - ❑ Simultaneous outbreaks throughout the country
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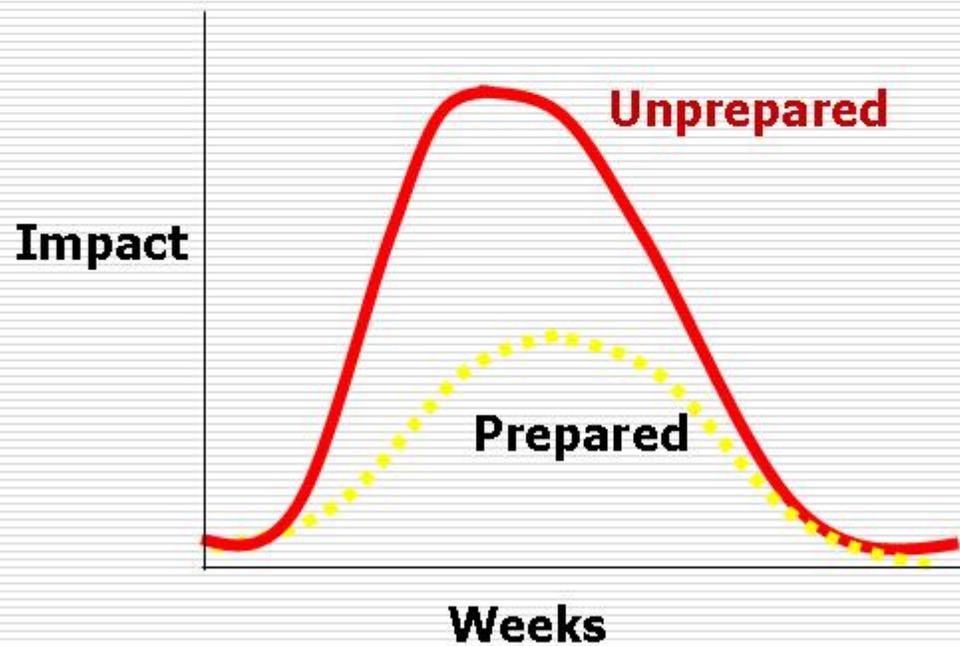
Why Prepare for Disasters?

- ❑ Each year disasters such as hurricanes, fires, floods and tornadoes force businesses to close
 - ❑ At least 25 percent of businesses that close do not reopen
 - ❑ Many that do reopen struggle to stay in business
 - ❑ Small to mid-sized businesses (SMB) are especially vulnerable because few have the resources to assess the disaster risks and develop plans to recover and survive
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Why Prepare for Disasters?

- ❑ Of SMBs that experience a disaster and have *no emergency plan*, 43% never reopen and if they reopen, only 29% are still operating 2 years later
 - ❑ Disasters that threaten business can happen anywhere at any time
 - ❑ The consequence of not being prepared for disasters can mean more than property loss. It can mean the loss of business, jobs, economic well-being
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Impact of Planning



Adapted from HHS

Elements of Preparedness Planning

- Continuity Planning (COOP)
 - Prepare your workforce
 - Address workplace safety
 - Promote individual preparedness
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Continuity of Operations Planning

- Create an all-hazards disaster plan and keep a copy in an off-site location
 - Know what kinds of emergencies might affect your business both internally and externally
 - Identify operations critical to survival of your business
 - Establish procedures for succession of management
 - Define crisis management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance
 - Plan for payroll continuity
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Continuity of Operations Planning

- ❑ Create a contact list for existing critical business contractors and others you plan to use in an emergency
 - ❑ Plan what you will do if you need to operate your business from another location
 - ❑ Decide who should participate in putting together emergency plan
 - ❑ Coordinate plan with suppliers, shippers and others you do business with
 - ❑ Review and practice plans routinely
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Continuity of Operations Planning

- Meet with your insurance provider to review coverage and find out what records will be required
 - Prepare for utility disruptions
 - Plan a secondary means of accessing the internet if it is vital to operations
 - If refrigeration is critical identify vendor in advance to supply ice or dry ice
 - Include how you will communicate with employees, customers and others in plan
 - Protect your data and IT systems
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Continuity of Operations Planning

□ Pandemic Influenza

- Planning should take into account that employees are most affected
 - Prepare now to prevent the spread of flu in the workplace
 - Prepare for a temporarily reduced workforce
 - Consider replacing in-person meetings with teleconferencing
 - Allow employees to work from home if possible
 - Maintain a sound sick leave program that allows employees to stay home when sick
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Preparing your Workforce

- ❑ Involve employees from all levels in emergency planning
 - ❑ Communicate response plans to employees and help them understand what is expected of them
 - ❑ Regularly educate, train employees and practice emergency plans
 - ❑ Include preparedness trainings in new employee orientation
 - ❑ Provide employees with information on disaster preparedness and pandemic influenza
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Preparing your Workforce

- ❑ Encourage employees to take basic First Aid and CPR training
 - ❑ Encourage employees to talk about medical conditions that may require special care in an emergency
 - ❑ Set up a telephone call tree to communicate with employees in an emergency
 - ❑ Keep employee emergency contact information on file up-to-date
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Workplace Safety

- ❑ Install fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in appropriate places
 - ❑ Put process in place for alerting fire dept.
 - ❑ Make available building and site maps with critical utility and emergency routes clearly marked
 - ❑ Teach employees how to identify suspect packages and letters
 - ❑ Ensure equipment is stable and secure
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Workplace Safety

- Speak to building manager about HVAC and maintenance to improve indoor air quality
 - Encourage annual flu vaccinations
 - Promote good health habits among employees that will minimize potential for spread of germs
 - Post respiratory and hand hygiene signs
 - Expand the number of soap and sanitizer stations throughout the building
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Workplace Safety

- Make an evacuation plan
 - Develop system for knowing who is in your business/building (including visitors)
 - Identify who will shut down critical operations and lock the doors
 - Post building maps where all can see
 - Plan two ways out of building
 - Establish a warning system
 - Designate an assembly site and try to account for people as they arrive
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Workplace Safety

- Make a shelter-in-place plan
 - Identify a room where you will take shelter in case of a tornado warning or if instructed by local authorities that the air is badly contaminated with a chemical
 - If feasible choose an interior room and preposition emergency supply kit
 - Develop a system for knowing who is in building
 - Establish a warning system
 - Account for all workers and visitors as they arrive at shelter
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Individual and Family Preparedness

- Encourage employees/co-workers to
 - Get an emergency kit
 - Make a family plan
 - Stay informed
 - Stop germs from spreading
 - Wash hands often
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Stay home when sick
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What are the costs?

- ❑ Depends on the size and scope of your business
 - ❑ First step is to develop a basic plan that will improve the likelihood that your company will survive and recover
 - ❑ Some aspects of the plan can be done at little or no cost – use list to get started.
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Where Do You Begin?

□ Ask what if:

- 40% of your staff were absent from work for weeks or months?
 - A sick employee came to work and infected others? Do you have leave policies in place?
 - Products or services that your business relies on were unavailable or limited?
 - The Health Department instituted community infection control measures that discouraged public gatherings? Can you operate remotely?
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Where Do You Begin?

Ask what if:

- Demand for your product increases or decreases significantly?
 - Your clients/customers wanted your services but were not able to come to you? Can you do your business on-line, delivery, or other ways?
 - You had decreased data communications from the lines being down or overburdened? Is your data backed up daily? Do you have redundant communication methods?
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Where Do You Begin?

- Ask what if:
 - You couldn't operate your business at all? Do you have business interruption insurance?
 - Banking response was delayed? How would this effect your payroll, loans, effects on your credit?
 - Your business has resources (tangible or human) that would be useful to other businesses affected by a pandemic or other disaster?
 - You had to relocate your business to an alternate facility
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Pandemic Strategies: Grocers & Retail

- Plan for scenarios that would result in an increase or decrease in demand for products
 - Stockpile some items and avoid certain foods
 - More non-perishable and pre-packaged goods, less fresh foods and poultry
 - Prepare to display and focus on items customers need most at the first notice of an alert
 - Identify items that could be offered in case or bulk quantities
 - Customers may come in less frequently but buy more at one time
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Grocers & Retail cont'd

- ❑ Consider shifting store duties so that more work is performed during hours your store is closed
 - ❑ Develop a cash handling plan in the event that armored security service is temporarily unavailable
 - ❑ Alter your store hours based on availability of personnel and goods
 - ❑ Collaborate with other grocers in your community to develop potential solutions to supply and demand issues
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Pandemic Strategies: Food Industry

- Develop other back up strategies to meet product shortages such as restricting restaurant hours or consolidating restaurant operations.
 - Develop plans to introduce/rapidly scale up
 - Take out and home delivery service
 - An internet order system for delivery or customer pick-up
 - Meal distribution system for regular customers
 - Research the potential and develop a plan to use excess capacity to serve the increased demand for health care meals.
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Food Industry cont'd

- ❑ Identify priority products to sustain business—your “*must have's*”.
 - ❑ Create emergency purchase orders for “core” items. Negotiate with vendors to obtain appropriate commitments.
 - ❑ Develop a relationship with organizations such as Red Cross and Shelters to determine how restaurants may be able to help them carry out their emergency duties.
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Food Industry cont'd

- ❑ Develop relaxed product substitution rules such that product continues to flow.
 - ❑ Develop emergency delivery procedures to minimize human contact (staff, clients, drivers, suppliers).
 - ❑ Undertake business impact analysis to determine if you should stay open or shut down temporarily during a pandemic.
 - ❑ Identify partners in food industry who can provide home delivery options/services.
 - ❑ Develop relationships with taxi cab service.
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Are you Prepared?

- ❑ Community preparedness begins with YOU

- ❑ When you protect your business from disasters or any kind of significant business interruption you are protecting one of your community's most valuable assets.

Institute for Business & Home Safety

Fairfax County's Hand Washing Campaign

"Your Health is in Your Hands: WASH"



FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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Resources

- Department of Homeland Security
www.ready.gov/business/index.html
www.pandemicflu.gov/index.html
 - Institute of Business and Home Safety
www.ibhs.org
 - Fairfax County Health Department
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd
 - Fairfax County Business/Nonprofit Updates
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/esf15.htm>
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