



DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN A PANDEMIC



PREPAREDNESS



RESPONSE

This tool will help you to:

- Develop an organizational structure to manage a pandemic at a municipal level
- Assess needs, identify resources, plan, and implement the municipality's response to a pandemic

Who will implement this tool:

- The *municipal leadership team*
- Individuals responsible for disaster response and implementation

What Needs to Be Done?

No one will be able to prevent a severe pandemic from coming to your municipality. However, you can play a key role in leading your municipality through a pandemic and reducing the number of deaths by having an organized disaster management system in place to respond to a pandemic.

In any serious disaster a gap develops between resource needs and resource availability. In a severe pandemic this gap will be much worse due to global supply chain disruptions or delays and the fact that governments and aid organizations will be overwhelmed responding to all who need assistance at the same time. Your plan should assume that there will be little or no assistance coming from outside the municipality.

It is of prime importance that the municipal leaders read, discuss, and study their national, regional/state, and district pandemic response plans to understand:

- What plans are already in place
- What preparedness and response resources are available
- How the municipal level plan fits into the national pandemic response structure

As municipal leaders, you will be responsible for keeping the population healthy, calm, and safe during the 6 to 12 weeks of each severe pandemic wave (remember there could be as many as three waves). Your actions can determine whether there are many deaths or relatively few.

The most important goals of successful municipal pandemic management are to:

- Have a strong enough organizational structure to manage a pandemic in the municipality
- Continually assess needs, identify resources, plan the response, and implement the plan
- Keep the number of deaths to a minimum

STEPS TO FOLLOW FOR AN EFFECTIVE PANDEMIC RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

It is strongly recommended that your municipal leadership team work within existing disaster preparedness and response structures in the municipality. There is no reason to change a disaster management system that works! In fact, existing plans and resources are the foundation on which to build a local pandemic plan.

Therefore, prior to launching a pandemic preparedness and response effort in a municipality, the first step should be to read and follow the directions of the national, regional/state, or district pandemic response plan.

Finally, during any gathering before or during a pandemic, flu prevention protocols should always be exercised in order to protect against infection. Participants should be advised to:

- Wash their hands frequently
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Keep their distance
- Consider masks, if available
- Inform the group by phone or messenger and stay at home if feeling ill

STEPS:

1. **Establish an emergency operations center**
2. **Continually assess needs, identify resources, and plan for response**
3. **Implement the response**
4. **Prepare for community recovery**

STEP 1: ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The *Emergency Operations Center* (EOC) is a vital component of an effective disaster response center. The mayor and support staff responsible for the regular, daily functioning of the municipality may need to strengthen the organizational structure to manage a severe pandemic. Working with leaders from both the public and private sectors, create an EOC if one is not already present.

An EOC will:

- Work from a shared physical location
- Identify pandemic response sector representatives (see suggested sectors in the table on page 4)
- Include many already identified municipal leaders and disaster response personnel
- Serve as the center of all pandemic planning and response
- Keep the mayor updated and informed regarding the status of the pandemic, the status of all pandemic response activities, and the status of all available resources
- Support the needs of all responders



How to Create an Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

1. Before a severe pandemic arrives in the municipality, convene a meeting of all municipal leaders to include elected and appointed officials and private-sector leaders.
2. During this meeting select the most interested, qualified, and competent persons to lead each of the sectors listed in the table. In addition to the sector lead, identify at least one additional person per sector to provide relief and backup for the main representative. (See Tool 16: *Maintenance of Essential Services*)
3. Establish an independent physical location for the EOC where these people can work near one another and easily share information. If possible, the EOC should be located near the office of the mayor or other designated municipal leader.
4. To begin pandemic preparedness and response work in the municipality, complete the following EOC assignments. Please note that these assignments are meant to be completed over several days:

Initial EOC Assignments:

- Complete the set-up of the EOC physical space. This space will need to be large enough to house all EOC members at the same time. Each EOC member will need a chair and desk (or table space), access to a working communication device* (cellular phone, landline phone, handheld radio, other), and a paper sign with the name of the sector clearly written and posted for other EOC members to see. Copies of all existing plans and contact information for all EOC members should also be provided (See Handout 1).
- Develop a municipal resource list and resource map (See Step 2).
- Plan and implement your municipal response (See Step 3).
- Include a plan for police or other security officers to protect all critical resources and facilities, if needed.
- Support response team activities.

** Individual communication devices are a critical resource for effective pandemic management. If possible, all municipal leaders should have individual communication devices and a master list of contact numbers (or access channels in the case of radio). These numbers should be written down and distributed.*

THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Sector	Pandemic Management Function
Mayor or local leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive leadership
Telecommunications and information technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight of communications within the disaster management response structure Coordination with telecommunications and information technology providers Maintenance and repair of telecommunications and information technology
Public safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Fire Public safety and security support Support to access, traffic, and crowd control Facility and resource security Coordination of first responder and emergency medical activities
Public health and medical services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-wide health promotion, infection prevention, and household preparedness Medical care for pandemic and non-pandemic disease Emergency food/food aid Mental health services
Public works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilities Water Roads Garbage removal and sanitation Infrastructure protection and emergency repair Engineering services and construction management
Communications and external affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency public information and protective action guidance Media and community relations Trained media spokespersons Intergovernmental communications
Logistics and transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics planning Resource support (facility space, office equipment and supplies, contracting services, etc.) Maintenance and repair of transportation Vehicles Mass fatality planning
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food safety and security Food stockpile assistance
Municipal finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade and commerce Labor

Sector	Pandemic Management Function
Business sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking • Commercial enterprises • Chamber of Commerce • Small businesses
Volunteer coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain up-to-date information on potential volunteers for all sectors • Coordinate training and use of volunteers
Community recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic community impact assessment • Short-term relief activities • Long-term recovery and resilience building
Other (as needed)	

STEP 2: CONTINUALLY ASSESS NEEDS, IDENTIFY RESOURCES, AND PLAN FOR RESPONSE

Remember to read and follow the directions of the national, regional/state, or district pandemic response plan, as these plans will serve as the basis upon which to build a municipal response.

You and your disaster response team will need to focus on accomplishing the following goals simultaneously. The primary goal will be to keep the number of deaths in a municipality to a minimum, so first consideration should be given to what people need to stay alive during a severe pandemic.

HOW TO ASSESS AND IDENTIFY MUNICIPAL RESOURCES

Develop a resource list.

Each EOC representative should identify and list any and all resources that might be required to meet the needs of their sector. For example, the EOC representative for transportation should ask vehicle owners in the municipality if their vehicles could be made available for pandemic response activities. From these responses, the transportation representative then compiles a master list of all available vehicles. In addition, a handout is provided to begin to assess healthcare resources as an example. Similar documents should be developed for the other sectors.

As each EOC representative develops a similar list, the EOC will have a strong indication of which resources are available for pandemic response. Over time, resource availability will change; this is important information for the municipal leaders to have in making decisions.

One of the most important resources that will be needed for the response is human resources. Volunteers will be needed to assist in a variety of tasks, both ones that require special skills and others that do not require skills or expertise. In a severe pandemic, there will be a role for anyone who is available to assist.



A volunteer coordinator should be designated to compile a master list of all volunteers, trained and untrained, and to coordinate the use of the volunteers during the response. (For more information, see Tool 17, *Volunteer Coordination* and Tool 16, *Maintenance of Essential Services*.)

Develop a municipal resource map.

Typically a map of the municipality will be available in the mayor's (or designated municipal leader's) office or can be obtained from a local office of law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical services, or the military. In the event a municipal map is unavailable, the EOC should draw a simple municipal map as shown in the picture at left. Such maps typically include useful information such as key landmarks, roads, water, schools, places of worship, and other infrastructure. The EOC should identify listed resources on its municipal map using colored stick pins or labels.

The municipal resource map will help determine what gaps in resources exist in the municipality, while demonstrating to the community at large that an organized preparedness and response effort is underway.

Identify gaps and plan to address them.

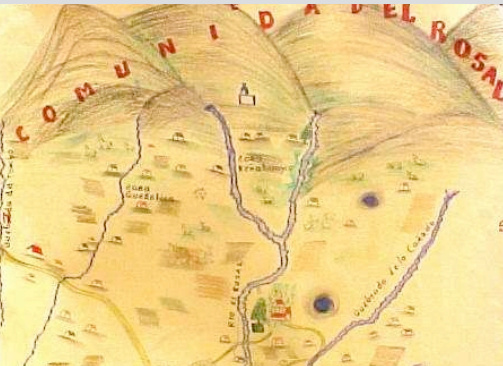
Once both the needs for resources and the available resources have been identified, you can begin to develop priority areas to address existing gaps. An example may be the need to determine how to prioritize anticipated needs for gasoline or electricity in the event there is an insufficient amount available.

Develop a multisector municipal response plan.

As discussed, the national, regional/state, and district pandemic response will serve as the basis upon which to build the municipal response plan. Be sure to include the local reinforcement of all national messages in your plan.

A municipal response plan should include the following:

- *Overall goal of the plan:* Keep the number of deaths in the municipality to a minimum.
- *Key objectives of the plan (use the Tools to develop these):*
 - Provide executive leadership, including continuing essential government and private sector services during the pandemic, and determining who will hold authority in the municipality, in the event the mayor (or designated municipal leader) becomes ill or dies. (For more information, see Tool 16, *Maintenance of Essential Services*.)
 - Limit the spread of disease in the municipality.
 - Establish policies for social distancing (See Tool 5, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality*).
 - Determine legal framework for social distancing policies
 - Assure adequate food and water for everyone in the municipality (See Tools 7–11 in the *Food Security and Livelihoods* section).
 - Use available healthcare resources to reduce deaths from both pandemic and non-pandemic illness (See Tools 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the *Health* section).
 - Maintain calm (See Tools 12, 13, and 14 in the *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications* section).



- *Work assignments:*
 - Determine what needs to get done to achieve the above objectives.
 - Delegate assignments to appropriate EOC sector representatives.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT THE RESPONSE

The above municipal response plan, along with a resource list and map, will serve as the basis for implementing the day-to-day pandemic response. This response will be led by the EOC and carried out in regular work shifts.

Hold a daily or work-shift update meeting: Each work shift should begin with a briefing of EOC representatives coming on duty by those finishing a shift. Topics to be covered in this meeting include:

- Update of the latest pandemic information and any public communication
- Update of all major response activities carried out by sector during the last shift
- Update of all major non-response occurrences during last shift
- Update of the resource list and resource map to show what's still available where

Write up a (1- to 2-page) daily response plan: Immediately following the shift update meeting, EOC representatives coming on duty should write up a daily response plan to include:

- Period of time to be covered by the plan
- Objectives to be achieved during the coming shift
- Delegation of work detailing which EOC sector representatives are responsible for which specific tasks to achieve the objectives of the day
- Expected weather forecast as this can greatly impact mobility of resources and transport of personnel
- Reminder of personal protective measures (social distancing, personal hygiene)

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR COMMUNITY RECOVERY

This municipal pandemic management tool is cyclical in nature. Once the municipal leaders have finalized the organizational structure, assessed needs, identified resources, and developed a municipal plan, the daily update meetings and response implementation should be repeated for as long as resources and capable personnel are needed.

Strong municipal pandemic management is one of the most important steps toward the future recovery of a community following a pandemic. However, there are numerous other activities municipal leaders can undertake to enhance and accelerate the municipality's recovery following a pandemic. These activities include those that *reduce fear* (of going without food, of getting the flu, of death, of crime and violence) and that *restore confidence* (in government, in fellow citizens, and in the ability to make a living). (For more information, see Tool 19, *Recovery and Resilience*.)

Leaders must continually ask the question, "What can we do to help our community recover from the pandemic?"

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM CONTACT LIST

Once your municipality's official emergency response team has been assembled, fill out and keep handy a contact list for all team members, such as in the example below. (Please note this list is not in order of importance.)

Date last updated _____

Team Member	Primary	Backup
Mayor (or municipal leader)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Emergency Response Chairperson	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Public Safety and Security Sector Coordinator (includes police, fire, emergency medical services)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Public Health and Medical Services Sector Coordinator	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Public Works Sector Coordinator (includes water, power, sanitation, road repair)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:

Team Member	Primary	Backup
Communications and External Affairs Sector Lead Coordinator (Includes trained media spokesperson)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Logistics and Transportation Coordinator	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Food Sector Coordinator (food security)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Business Sector Liaison (trade, commerce, banking, tourism, labor)	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Volunteer Coordinator	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Recovery Coordinator	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:

Team Member	Primary	Backup
Municipal Finance Sector Coordinator	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Telecommunications and IT Services	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
Others as available and needed, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services • Family welfare • Faith/religion counselor • School coordinator • Community liaison • Legal representative • NGO representatives 	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:	Name: Work: Home: Cell: Email:
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ASSESSING HEALTHCARE RESOURCES

Municipality: _____ Village/Neighborhood: _____ Date: _____

	Describe Resources Available
Total # of inpatient beds (in hospitals, private clinics, health posts)	
Services available at healthcare facilities (for example: ventilators, intensive care, respiratory isolation, intravenous hydration and antibiotics, laboratory, maternal and child care, surgery)	
Maximum # of outpatient clinic and office visits per day	
Doctors	
Nurses	
Pharmacists	
Community health workers	
Community volunteers	
Traditional healers	

