

Pandemic Influenza

Church Preparedness Checklist

A Guide for Planning

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January 2007

Adapted by the Vancouver Church Pandemic Preparation Working Group

from the Centers for Disease Control document: January 9, 2006 Version 1.1:
Faith-based and Community Organizations Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Checklist

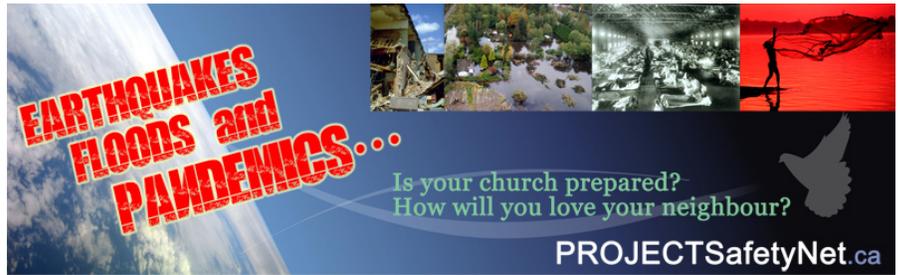
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Church Preparedness Checklist A Guide for Planning

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Adapted from the
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Faith-based and Community Organizations Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Checklist
(Available at: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/faithbasedCommunityChecklist.pdf>) and from other sources



1. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your church and its mission:	<input type="radio"/> Not started <input type="radio"/> In progress <input type="radio"/> Completed
<p>Assign key individuals to a Preparedness Planning Group with the authority to develop, maintain and act upon an influenza pandemic preparedness and response plan. The plan should provide the following: A) An open and frank assessment of the options facing your church in respect of an influenza pandemic; B) Church preparation to meet the religious and pastoral needs of the community at that time; and C) Confidence in the community that your church is prepared for such a national disaster.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on your church's activities and services. Recognize the potential scale of the outbreak-- its possible duration, peaks and waves. Consider how municipal, provincial and federal government guidelines regarding local, provincial and nationwide actions will impact your church activities^{1, 2, 3, 5, 6}, and how you might respond. Plan for situations likely to require increasing, decreasing or altering the services your church delivers^{16, 19, 21, 24, 25}. For instance: A) <i>Do you keep the church open for services and regular activities to enable the healthy and recovered to receive spiritual support and healing during such traumatic events;</i> B) <i>Do you close the church to minimize the risk of infection from people who are infected but not symptomatic, and who are therefore able to spread infection without realizing it;</i> or C) <i>Do you plan for alternative approaches to maintain ministry while minimizing risk of infection?</i></p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on outside resources and activities on which your church depends to deliver its services (e.g. giving, supplies, travel, international programs, etc.)^{12, 16, 19, 25}.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on those who depend on your services, local and international (e.g. <u>local</u>: members, adherents, neighbours, other users of the facility, etc.; and <u>international</u>: missionaries, supported projects, etc.^{1, 3, 8, 9, 10}).</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Outline what the organizational structure will be during an emergency and revise this periodically. The outline should identify key contacts with multiple back-ups, role and responsibilities, and who is supposed to report to whom^{12, 25}.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Noting age groups that may be most vulnerable and the age grouping of your pastors, workers and congregation, consider the possible impact pandemic influenza could have on you^{5, 6, 12, 25}. Identify and train essential staff (including full-time, part-time and unpaid or volunteer staff) needed to carry on your church's work during a pandemic. Include back up plans and cross-train staff in other jobs so that if staff are sick, others are ready to come in to carry on the work^{12, 16, 19, 25}. Utilize retirees in your plan.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Test your response and preparedness plan using an exercise or drill, and review and revise your plan as needed.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

2. Communicate with and educate your staff, members, and people in the communities that you serve:

- ☞ Not started
- ☞ In progress
- ☞ Completed

Acquaint your planning group with national, provincial, local health authority and, especially, local government influenza pandemic preparedness and response plans^{1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 28}. Know how your preparedness and response plan can complement that of your local government. Avoid unnecessarily trying to prepare for, or duplicate, services that are already covered in other plans for your area. Find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information and other public health advisories from the Public Health Agency of Canada¹, Province of BC², BC HealthGuide HealthFiles^{4, 15}, BC Centre for Disease Control³, Vancouver Coastal Health⁵ and Fraser Health⁶ and the US Centers for Disease Control⁷ (*Note: Similar resources are available for other provinces and health authorities/boards*). Make relevant information from this available to your church and others. With reference to your local health authority and local government emergency plans, and plans and examples of church response^{5, 6, 11, 13, 21, 25, 28}, adopt, adapt or develop:

- 'User friendly' versions of relevant health agency and governmental literature for distribution to staff and congregation;
- Training protocols for pastors and lay workers who will need specific training in hygienic precautions to reduce the risk of infection. This should include training materials and plans for training delivery; and
- Protocols to identify and train volunteers among the congregation to take on responsibility to provide supportive care for individuals and families affected by illness^{13, 14, 15, 17}.

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Identify key contacts with local health authorities and local government for liaison, information and consultation^{5, 6, 11, 13, 14}.

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Distribute materials with basic information about pandemic influenza: signs and symptoms, how it is spread, ways to protect yourself and your family (e.g. respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette), family preparedness plans, and how to care for ill persons at home^{3, 5, 6, 15}. Taking into account what age groups may be most vulnerable, consider the age profile of your pastors, other staff and congregation and the possible impact on you. Utilize toolkits from local health authority influenza pandemic plans^{5, 6, 15, 20, 23}.

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When appropriate, include basic information about pandemic influenza in public meetings (e.g. sermons, classes, trainings, small group meetings and announcements). Keep basic health messaging consistent with local health authority messaging^{14, 15}.

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Share information about your pandemic preparedness and response plan with staff, members, and people in the communities you serve²¹.

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Develop tools to communicate information about pandemic status and your church's actions. This might include websites, flyers, local newspaper announcements, pre-recorded, widely distributed phone messages, etc.²⁰.

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Consider your church's unique contribution to addressing rumors, misinformation, fear and anxiety. Avoid confusion by keeping your health messaging consistent with local health authority messaging^{3, 5, 6, 15, 16}.

☞ ☞ ☞

Advise staff, members, and people in the communities you serve to follow information provided by local and provincial public health authorities, local government and emergency management agencies^{5, 6, 27, 28}.

☞ ☞ ☞

Ensure that what you communicate is appropriate for the cultures, languages and reading levels of your staff, members, and people in the communities you serve^{15, 16, 24}.

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3. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your staff, members, and the communities that you serve:	<input type="radio"/> Not started <input type="radio"/> In progress <input type="radio"/> Completed
Plan for staff absences during a pandemic due to personal and/or family illness, quarantine or home isolation and due to school, business, and public transportation closures. Planning should consider full-time, part-time and volunteer staff ^{15, 16, 20, 25} .	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Encourage yearly influenza vaccination for staff, members, and people who are eligible for publicly funded vaccine in the communities you serve. Encourage annual influenza vaccination for staff. Consider employer funding for annual influenza immunization for those employees not eligible for publicly funded vaccine ^{1, 3, 4, 15} .	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Consider access to needed services, such as mental health and social services, for your staff, church members, and people in the communities you serve during a pandemic; improve access to these services as needed ^{1, 23, 25} .	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Identify people with special needs (including, but not limited to the elderly, people with disabilities, families with limited English and single parent families) and be sure to include their needs in your response and preparedness plan. Establish relationships with them in advance so they will expect and trust your presence during a crisis ^{1, 24, 25} .	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

4. Set up policies to follow during a pandemic:

↻ Not started

↻ In progress

↻ Completed

Set up policies for staff leave, without penalty, for personal illness or care for sick family members during a pandemic^{16, 20}.

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Know how to check local health authority recommendations about staying home when ill, quarantine, home isolation, working and travelling. Set up mandatory sick-leave policies for staff members suspected to be ill, or who become ill at the worksite or who need to be away from work in accordance with other health recommendations. Employees should remain at home until their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to duty^{5, 6, 15, 19, 27}.

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Set up policies for flexible work hours and working from home^{16, 20}.

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Evaluate your church's usual activities and services (including religious rites and practices) to identify those that may facilitate virus spread from person to person. Set up policies to modify these activities to prevent the spread of pandemic influenza (e.g. guidance for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, and instructions for persons with influenza symptoms to stay home rather than visit in person). Such policies should be consistent with local health authority recommendations. Assess all your options to ensure that the course of action taken by your church maximizes the support provided to your congregation and community^{19, 20, 26}.

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Follow Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)⁹ and Centers for Disease Control (CDC)⁸ travel recommendations during an influenza pandemic. Review World Health Organization (WHO)¹⁰ travel recommendations for additional international recommendations or advisories. Recommendations may include restrictions on travel to affected domestic and international sites, recall of non-essential staff working in or near an affected site when an outbreak begins and distribution of health information to persons who are returning from affected areas. If your church supports individuals to serve in other areas of the world, keep aware of sending organization decisions/needs regarding their relocation, return or other action recommended in response to influenza outbreaks in or near those areas²⁷.

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Set procedures for: 1) Activating your church's response plan when an influenza pandemic is declared by public health authorities; and 2) Altering your church's operations accordingly²⁵.

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5. Allocate resources to protect your staff, members, and people in the communities that you serve during a pandemic:

- ☞ Not started
- ☞ In progress
- ☞ Completed

Determine the amount of supplies needed to promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette and how they will be obtained. Make determinations in accordance with local health authority recommendations^{3, 5, 6, 17, 18, 22}.



Consider focusing your church's efforts during a pandemic on providing services that are most needed during the emergency (e.g. social services, mental and spiritual health)^{17, 18, 24, 25}. Plan to coordinate/cooperate with local governments and local health authorities^{5, 6} whenever possible in providing additional social service in the community (see 6. below).



6. Coordinate with external organizations and help your community:

- ➡ Not started
- ➡ In progress
- ➡ Completed

Understand the roles of federal, provincial, local health authority and emergency responders^{1, 2, 5, 6, 12} and what to expect and what not to expect from each in the event of a pandemic.



Work with your local health authority^{5, 6} (mainly through interaction with your local government), emergency responders, local healthcare facilities and insurers to understand their plans and what they can provide. Inform them of your preparedness and response plan and what your church is able to contribute. Take part in local health authority^{5, 6} and local government planning, as appropriate. Assign a point of contact to maximize communication between your organization and your local health authority and local government. Investigate and discuss with these agencies as to whether or not clergy or staff supporting clergy will be designated as key workers during a pandemic and eligible to receive anti-viral drugs and vaccination as a priority. Advocate that faith communities are agents of social cohesion, and therefore during times of national emergency, their continued work in providing pastoral care, counseling those who are traumatized, ministering to the sick and dying, conducting funerals and providing bereavement follow-up is essential.



Understand your local situation and means of access so you are able to coordinate with emergency responders and local healthcare facilities for optimal availability of medical advice and timely/urgent healthcare services and treatment for your staff, members, and people in the communities you serve. [Note the valuable access to a registered nurse, available in BC through calling the BC HealthGuide NurseLine^{4, 15}: 24/7 availability with services for the hearing impaired and comprehensive translation services available at 604-215-4700 or 1-866-215-4700 (or 1-866-889-4700 for the hearing-impaired)].



Share what you learn from developing your preparedness and response plan with other churches and church organizations to improve community response efforts.



Work together with other Faith-Based and Community Organizations in your area and through networks (e.g. denominations, associations, etc.) to help your communities prepare for pandemic influenza. Ensure that the church plays a practical and proactive role in protecting and assisting your community when confronted with this national emergency.



APPENDIX: Internet Website References:

1. National (Public Health Agency of Canada): <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/> and http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pandemic_e.html
2. Provincial: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pandemic/>
3. BCCDC: <http://www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=150>
4. BC HealthFiles: <http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile94a.stm>
5. Vancouver Coastal: <http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/>
6. Fraser: <http://www.fraserhealth.ca/HealthInfo/PublicHealth/PandemicInfluenza/Pandemic+FH+Prepares.htm>
7. U.S. Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>
8. Centers for Disease Control Travel: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>
9. National (Public Health Agency of Canada-TRAVEL): <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/>
10. World Health Organisation: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en/>
11. City of Coquitlam: www.coquitlam.ca/Residents/Public+Safety/Emergency+Preparedness/default.htm for Disaster Response Plans; Emergency Social Services; Emergency Supply Information; Emergency Amateur Radio Information; et al
12. Arrange for pastors/lay workers to attend such courses as the Congregational Preparation for a Medical Emergency or Epidemic/Pandemic – a presentation of Thanatological Education Resources Center and Asbury Online Institute <http://www.tearcenter.com> and www.aoi.edu/tear_wsmd.htm
13. For example, the City of Burnaby Website www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/residents/safety/emrgnc.html for information on the following: Burnaby Emergency Program, Emergency Program Coordinator, Pandemic Influenza Information, Emergency Social Services
14. The aforementioned web sites provide updated information about avian and pandemic influenza;
Provincial: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pandemic/>
BCCDC: <http://www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=150>
World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en/>
15. Use the BC HealthGuide and the BC HealthFiles listed below as resources:
 - Staying Healthy During a Pandemic – www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile94b.stm
 - Self-Care During a Pandemic – www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile94c.stm
 - BC HealthGuide – www.bchealthguide.org/kbaltindex.asp
 - BC NurseLine – www.bchealthguide.org/nurseline.stm
 - BC NurseLine phone numbers for access to a registered nurse: Toll-free in BC 1-866-215-4700; In Greater Vancouver 604-215- 4700; Deaf and Hearing-impaired 1-866-889-4700
16. Refer to <http://new.gbqm-umc.org/umcor/work/health/birdflu/churches/> for information on the Impact on Church Life, such as
 - Routine pastoral care procedures adapting to the need to practice measures for effective prevention of the spread of diseaseHow community and worship practices can be changed to reduce virus transmission
 - Dealing with expected Employee Absenteeism
 - Keeping informed and proper communication strategies
 - Creation of a Cross-Functional Church Leadership Team
 - Instituting Quarantine and Stockpiling Policies
17. Use and refer to the Justice Institute of BC website <http://www.jibc.bc.ca/emergency> for programs/services/courses preparing the Church Pastoral and Other Staff in the areas of:
 - Emergency Management
 - Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness
 - Health Emergency Management
 - Emergency Support Programs
 - Emergency Social Services

APPENDIX: Internet Website References (continued):

18. Refer to Westwood's emergency plan where roles of church administrators, church parish nurses, et al can play in helping their churches plan for this possibility. See <http://www.nacbancc.org/images/4WestwoodEmergencyPrep.pdf>
19. Refer to the website of the Bishop of Lancaster "Pastoral Planning for a Flu Pandemic" www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/bishop/Pastoral_planning_for_a_flu_pandemic_RevNickDonnelly.pdf sections dealing with:
- What could be the impacton the Sacramental and Pastoral Life of our Community Option A - Keeping the Churches Open Or Option B – Closing the Churches?
 - How do we make the decision between Option A or B?
 - How will the Government's National Plan Impact on the Church?
 - How do we maintain the Sacramental and Pastoral Care of the Sick?
20. Refer to the Annotated Index entitled "Managing Pandemic Influenza – A Guide for BC Industry and Commerce from the following website: www.health.gov.bc.ca/pandemic/industry.html sections dealing with Absenteeism; Antiviral Medications; Employment Policies; Immunization; Infection Countermeasures; Isolation/Masks; Quarantine/Recovery; Vaccine; et al
21. Refer to the Christian Emergency Network Website: www.christianemergencynetwork.org/ specifically the section dealing with Church Safety and Security
22. Refer to Homeland Defense Journal website for a detailed listing of recommended supplies needed for pandemic preparedness such as various equipment; general supplies; vaccine administration supplies; communication equipment; and emergency kit supplies. See <http://www.homelanddefensejournal.com/pdfs/PandemicReportSurvey.pdf>
23. Refer to the website of the U.S. Office for Victims of Crime and the National Organization for Victims Assistance <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/crt/pdfwelc.htm> sections 15 and 16 dealing with Pre-Crisis Planning for Local Communities and Response Plans for Communities in Crisis respectively, and Appendix A – Roles in Disasters.
24. Refer to <http://www.elca.org/disaster/pandemic/faithfulresponse.asp> sections dealing with Responding Faithfully to Pandemic Flu; Congregational Life; and Health Care and the Church. Learn about special pastoral care needs during disaster and emergency www.elca.org/disaster/resources including: "Partner with nearby congregations to share resources"; "Consider the special needs of the most vulnerable people in your congregation and community" and "Reach out to community groups and public health officials to offer your congregation as a resource".
25. Refer to the Preparing for Disaster: A Guide for Lutheran Congregations website <http://www.elca.org/disaster/resources/PreparingCong.pdf> Sections 4 - Training Church Staff for Preparedness and Response; 5 –Prepare to Serve Congregational Members; 6 – Prepare to Serve Your Community and 9- Your Congregation's Ministry during Disaster.
26. Draft of a Pandemic Influenza Management Plan based on the model provided in http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/cpa/publications/annotated_annex.pdf 's sample (see pages 28 and 29).
27. Refer to the Church World Service Emergency Response Program website at <http://www.cwserp.org/training/guidebook/sec01.php> that includes:
- **Why, What & How**--Cooperative Faith-Based Disaster Recovery In Your Community [PDF](#) (75K)
 - **Planning, Prevention, & Mitigation**--The Religious Community as Disaster Educator [PDF](#) (82K)
 - **Bringing God's Presence to Trauma Victims**--The Disaster Response Chaplain ([PDF](#) 68K)
 - **Spiritual Care: Bringing God's Peace to Disaster** [PDF](#) (272K)
28. BC Provincial Emergency Program: http://www.pep.bc.ca/hazard_preparedness/Disease_Outbreaks.html

