

# Hospital preparedness checklist for pandemic influenza

Focus on pandemic (H1N1) 2009





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# Abstract



Hospitals play a critical role within the health system in providing essential medical care to the community, particularly during a crisis, such as an epidemic or a pandemic. Prolonged and combined outbreaks can lead to the progressive spread of disease with rapidly increasing service demands that can potentially overwhelm the capacity of hospitals and the health system at large. To enhance the readiness of the health facilities to cope with the challenges of an epidemic, a pandemic or any other emergency or disaster, hospital managers need to ensure the initiation of relevant generic priority action. This document aims to provide a checklist of the key action to carry out in the context of a continuous hospital emergency preparedness process.

## Keywords

Disease outbreaks

Influenza A virus, H1N1 subtype

Disaster planning

Hospital units - organization and administration

Hospital planning

Health resources - utilization

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# Glossary



## **Acute respiratory diseases (ARD)**

ARD are upper or lower respiratory tract illnesses, usually infectious in etiology, which can result in a spectrum of diseases ranging from asymptomatic or mild infection to severe and fatal disease, depending on the causative pathogen and the environmental and host factors. For the purpose of this document, the definition of ARD is acute respiratory tract illness caused by an infectious, human-to-human-transmitted agent. The onset is typically rapid, over a period of hours but can take up to several days. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, cough, sore throat, headache, myalgia, coryza and dyspnoea. Examples of the pathogens referred to in this document as causing ARD include rhinovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, parainfluenza virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated corona virus and influenza virus.

## **Adequately ventilated single room**

A single room or a side room in a ward with  $\geq 12$  air changes per hour without controlled direction of air-flow.

## **Aerosol-generating procedures**

Procedures reported to be aerosol-generating and associated with a documented increased risk of pathogen transmission include endotracheal intubation and related procedures, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, bronchoscopy, autopsy and surgery where high-speed devices (e.g. a saw) are used.

## **Capacity**

The combination of all of the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals (1).

## **Case**

A patient suspected of or confirmed as being infected with a pathogen causing an epidemic- or pandemic-prone ARD.

## **Contingency planning**

A management process that analyses specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations. Contingency planning results in organized and coordinated courses of action with clearly-identified institutional roles and resources, information processes, and operational arrangements for specific actors at times of need. Based on scenarios of possible emergency conditions or disaster events, it allows key actors to envision, anticipate and solve problems that can arise during crises. Contingency planning is an important part of overall preparedness. Contingency plans need to be regularly updated and exercised (1).

## **Disaster**

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources (1).

## **Emergency**

A sudden and usually unforeseen event that calls for immediate measures to minimize its adverse consequences (2).

## **Epidemic**

The occurrence in a community or region of cases of an illness, specific health-related behaviour, or other health-related events that are clearly beyond normal expectancy (3).

## **Health-care-associated (nosocomial) infection**

An infection acquired while receiving treatment for a separate condition in a hospital or other health-care setting.

**Incident action plan**

A document that guides the response for the operational period. It contains the overall incident objectives and strategy, general tactical actions, and supporting information to enable successful completion of objectives (4).

**Incident command group (ICG)**

A multidisciplinary body that provides the overall technical leadership for and oversight of all aspects of crisis management, coordinates the overall response, approves action plans and serves as an authority on all activities and decisions. The composition of the ICG may vary according to local capacity and hospital size. Small hospitals with limited resources and services may manage with a more simplified command structure than is required for larger hospitals.

**Incident command system**

The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communication operating within a common organizational structure designed to aid in the management of resources for emergency incidents (4).

**Memorandum of understanding**

A formal document embodying the firm commitment of two or more parties to an undertaking and setting out its general principles but falling short of constituting a detailed contract or agreement (5).

**Pandemic**

An epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area crossing international boundaries, usually affecting a large number of people (3).

**Policy**

A formally advocated statement or understanding adopted to direct a course of action (5).

**Preparedness**

The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions (1).

**Resources**

Personnel, funding, facilities, and major supplies and equipment items available or potentially available in the case of a hazardous event.

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