

# Incident Planning Guide: Infectious Disease

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## Definition

This Incident Planning Guide is intended to address issues associated with infectious disease outbreaks. Infectious disease incidents can come from many sources and with little warning, as was seen with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), H1N1, zoonotic virus, etc. Hospitals may customize this Incident Planning Guide for their specific requirements.

## Scenario

An outbreak of unusually severe respiratory illness has occurred in Asia. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified this as a novel virus, a subtype never before isolated from humans. Large numbers of human cases are being reported in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and now the United States. Young children and pregnant women are most severely affected, and several deaths have been reported. Health departments have increased surveillance reporting and coordinated with news agencies to issue alerts advising anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms to immediately contact their healthcare providers. Your hospital, and other community hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, are experiencing a surge in patients presenting to be tested and demanding medications, many showing flu-like symptoms. Conflicting guidance from various sources is confusing both the public and healthcare workers regarding appropriate personal protective equipment and which medications are, or are not, effective in prevention and treatment. Local news reports cite confirmed cases of the novel virus in young children and public school systems are beginning to close. Your hospital's emergency department is at 130% of normal capacity, all inpatient beds are in use, and two patients with respiratory illness are on mechanical ventilation. One death has occurred that appears to be outbreak related. Hospital staff members are concerned about exposure and transmitting the virus to their families, and so are demanding personal protective equipment of various types. Increasing levels of staff shortages threaten to affect hospital operations. Alternate staffing plans, visitation, and daily operational plans are being considered, as is behavioral health counseling for patients, staff, and visitors.

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**Does your Emergency Management Program address the following issues?**

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**Mitigation**

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| 1. | Does your hospital address the threat and impact of an infectious disease event in the annual Hazard Vulnerability Analysis, including the identification of mitigation strategies and tactics?  |
| 2. | Does your hospital participate in pre-incident local response planning with public safety officials (e.g., emergency medical services, fire, and law enforcement), local emergency management officials, other area hospitals, regional healthcare coalition coordinators, and other appropriate public and private organizations, including meetings and conference calls to plan and share status? |
| 3. | Does your hospital provide information and education to staff on infection control precautions, personal protective equipment, exposure prophylaxis, and dependent care options?   |
| 4. | Does your hospital have a plan to limit access to the hospital to prevent exposure of patients, staff, and facilities?   |
| 5. | Does your hospital use expert information sources (e.g., Infectious Disease Society, in house infectious disease clinician, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, city or county emergency operations plan) when planning for infectious disease incidents, evaluation, and treatment?   |

**Preparedness**

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| 1. | Does your hospital have an Infectious Disease Plan?  |
| 2. | Does your hospital exercise the Infectious Disease Plan yearly and revise as needed?   |
| 3. | Does your hospital have procedures to notify appropriate internal and external experts, including security, emergency department, laboratory, safety, respiratory, critical care, infection control, engineering, and facilities?  |
| 4. | Does your hospital have a procedure to obtain incident specific details from local emergency medical services immediately after notification of a pending incident and regularly throughout the response?  |
| 5. | Does your hospital have a plan to expand patient care capabilities in the face of a rapid surge of infectious patients that includes:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Rapid identification, triage, and isolation practices in the emergency department and clinics?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Expanding isolation capability (cohorting, portable HEPA filtration, etc.)?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Canceling elective surgeries and outpatient appointments?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Establishment of alternative treatment sites?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Integration with other local hospitals, clinics, public health, and emergency management? |
| 6. | Does your hospital have a plan to manage dispensing antiviral medications to staff (Mass Prophylaxis Plan) and for administering vaccines when available?  |
| 7. | Does your hospital have a plan to monitor the health status of staff who participate in triage and treatment activities and to provide appropriate medical follow-up?  |
| 8. | Does your hospital have a policy to send sick staff home and to ensure that sick staff stay home?  |

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| 9.  | Does your hospital have an emergency patient registration plan? Does this plan include a searchable method to identify those patients presenting with infectious disease complaints?   |
| 10. | Does your hospital have policies and procedures to track emergency department, outpatient activity, and inpatient census data for trends, and to report information to the appropriate partners?   |
| 11. | Does your hospital have a procedure to limit hospital access to a small number of monitored entrances so that patients and visitors entering the hospital can be screened for illness (e.g., screening questions, temperature checks)?   |
| 12. | Does your hospital have a plan for ensuring safe transportation routes and infection control procedures (e.g., patients wearing masks) when transferring patients through the hospital (i.e., from the emergency department to inpatient units)?   |
| 13. | Does your hospital have a plan to provide alternate care provisions (e.g., point-of-care testing, portable x-rays, limited diagnostic services)?   |
| 14. | Does your hospital have a procedure to regularly inventory bed availability and census?  |
| 15. | Does your hospital have a process in place to determine appropriate amounts of personal protective equipment and hand hygiene supplies required for incident response? Is there a process in place to procure additional supplies?   |
| 16. | Does your hospital have a procedure to regularly inventory antiviral and medication supplies, personal protective equipment, and other required supplies?  |
| 17. | Does your hospital have a policy to determine appropriate numbers of essential personnel that would be prioritized for receiving prophylaxis, vaccine, and personal protective equipment to protect those staff most at risk and to ensure the continuation of essential services (e.g., medical staff, nursing, environmental services, facilities, nutrition and food services, administrative, and ancillary clinical staff including respiratory therapy, radiology technicians, medical records, information technology, and laboratory)? |
| 18. | Does your hospital have a plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safely package, identify, and transfer laboratory specimens to external testing sites, including local, state, and federal labs?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the capability to perform specific screening tests for designated pathogens?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relay laboratory results to internal clinical sites and external partners?</li> </ul>  |
| 19. | Does your hospital have a procedure to provide scheduled family briefings and to establish a family assistance center?   |
| 20. | Does your hospital identify criteria and procedures to modify the patient visitation policy?   |
| 21. | Does your hospital have a Communications Plan that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the Joint Information Center in cooperation with local, emergency medical services?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of social media for communication, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Who can use social media?</li> <li>o Who approves the use of social media?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When is use of social media not appropriate?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Procedures for notification of internal and external authorities (local, county, region, state)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A plan to distribute radios, auxiliary phones, and flashlights to appropriate people and areas?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A plan for rapid communication of weather status (watch or warning)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A plan for rapid communication of situation status to local emergency medical services and area hospitals?</li> </ul> |
| 22. | Does your hospital have a plan to address behavioral health support needs for staff, patients, and their families?  |

**Immediate and Intermediate Response**

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| 1.  | Does your hospital have a policy to monitor the health status and absenteeism of staff during the incident?  |
| 2.  | Does your hospital have a plan to track emergency department, inpatient, and clinic census and symptoms?   |
| 3.  | Does your hospital have triggers to implement the Infectious Disease Plan?   |
| 4.  | <p>Does your hospital have a Fatality Management Plan that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integration with local or state medical examiner or coroner?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation of evidence and chain of custody?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Religious and cultural concerns?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Management of contaminated decedents?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family notification procedures?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral health support for family and staff?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Documentation?</li> </ul> |
| 5.  | Does your hospital have a triage process to separate potentially infectious persons from noninfectious persons presenting for care?  |
| 6.  | Does your hospital monitor safe and consistent use of personal protective equipment?   |
| 7.  | Does your hospital have a plan to maintain hospital security?  |
| 8.  | Does your hospital have a process to ensure medically qualified and fit-tested personnel are available and assigned to use personal protective equipment, and to provide patient care?   |
| 9.  | Does your hospital have a process to address how your hospital receives timely and pertinent incident information from local emergency medical services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.?   |
| 10. | Does your hospital have a procedure to provide pertinent incident information to the treatment team, all treatment areas, security, and the Hospital Command Center?   |
| 11. | Does your hospital have a procedure to notify dispatching agencies of the triage location and ingress and egress routes for emergency medical services providers?  |
| 12. | Does your hospital have a procedure to receive information about the status of area hospitals?   |
| 13. | Does your hospital have a procedure to consult with resident experts for assessment and treatment guidelines?  |

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| 14.  | <p>Does your hospital have a media plan that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A process to establish a media briefing area?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A procedure to provide scheduled media briefings in conjunction with the local emergency medical services or the Joint Information Center?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Working with the local emergency medical services to address risk communications to the public?</li> </ul>  |
| 15.  | <p>Does your hospital have a process to provide accurate and continuous incident documentation, computerized or manual, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Patient care?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incident management (Incident Action Plan, Hospital Incident Command System forms, etc.)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incident related expenses?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Extended Response and System Recovery</b> |   |
| 1.   | Does your hospital have criteria to prioritize business continuity and recovery activities including repair and disinfection of the hospital?   |
| 2.   | Does your hospital have criteria to restore hospital operations to normal?  |
| 3.   | Does your hospital have a plan to provide behavioral health support and stress management debriefings to patients, staff, and families, including obtaining services from local or regional resources?  |
| 4.   | Does your hospital have procedures for reporting and documenting staff exposures and injuries?  |
| 5.   | <p>Does your hospital have a plan to adjust staff schedules to meet the needs of the response including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reassigning staff who have recovered from flu or other infectious diseases to care for infected patients?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reassigning staff at high risk for complications of infectious disease (e.g., pregnant women, immunocompromised persons) to low risk duties (e.g., no infectious patient care or administrative duties only)?</li> </ul> |
| 6.   | <p>Does your hospital have inventory procedures for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Current on site supplies of medications, equipment, and supplies?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receiving medications, equipment, and supplies from outside resources (federal, state, regional, or local stockpiles, vendors, other hospitals) and returning those medications or supplies upon termination of the incident?</li> </ul>   |
| 7.   | Does your hospital have a continuous process to capture all costs and expenditures related to the incident?   |
| 8.   | Does your hospital have Hospital Incident Management Team position depth to support extended operations?  |
| 9.   | Does your hospital have procedures to collect and collate incident documentation and formulate an After Action Report, Corrective Action and Improvement Plan?  |