

Appendix A: Pandemic Influenza Emergency Communications Strategy

The purpose of this appendix is to guide the communication efforts of the City of Redmond to educate and prepare City staff, residents, community and social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and business owners for an influenza pandemic. Effective and timely communication is critical before, during and after a pandemic.

This communications plan includes:

- A strategic framework for communication during an influenza pandemic, including the approval process for all communications.
- Identification of key influencers and spokespersons and strategies for leveraging these parties to strengthen the City's communication plan.
- A high-level implementation plan that outlines key topics the City must address at each phase of a pandemic and the tools currently available for addressing those topics.

Scope

The Communications Plan addresses a number of areas critical to successful public and stakeholder communications before, during and after a pandemic. The plan identifies core goals, objectives, strategies, key messages and audiences, key spokespersons, approval processes, media relations and evaluation common to all pandemic periods. It describes specific actions required during the pandemic alert, pandemic, and post-pandemic periods.

The information needs of internal and external stakeholder audiences in each phase are identified and appropriate messages and information products are described for each. Risk (or crisis) communications principles are incorporated in each phase.

Objectives

The objectives of the City's Pandemic Influenza Communications Strategy are as follows:

- To establish a broad network for disseminating information during all phases of a pandemic;
- To provide clear, accurate messaging to all audiences during all phases of the pandemic;
- To communicate transparently, accurately, and in a timely manner through a variety of methods to reach all audiences.

Guiding Principles

To help ensure high quality, credible communications, messaging for the pandemic will be driven by the following general principles:

- Messaging will be informed by research so information is accurate and credible.
- Information will be timely to help ensure that it is trustworthy and helpful.

- All strategies employed will leverage the reach and resources of key influencers to ensure that information is provided to all Redmond employees, residents, including non-English speakers and those with other communication challenges.
- Strategies will use existing communication channels and protocols wherever possible to reduce confusion and maximize efficiency.
- Messages and delivery strategies will be developed through broad collaborations of internal and external stakeholders to ensure that adequate attention is given to the diversity of audiences the City must reach.

Appropriate risk communication considerations should be applied before, during and after any major crisis. Effectively communicating complex, scientific or technical information can improve public responses. In this regard, the City will strive to:

- Provide information that is relevant and easily understood.
- Provide information that is specific to the potential threat including, to the greatest extent possible, the nature of the threat, when and where it is likely to occur, over what time period, and guidance on actions to be taken.
- Protect the credibility of the agencies providing information by being honest and direct.
- Avoid over-reassuring or underestimating risk.
- Show empathy; acknowledge fear and hardship.
- Advise people about what they can do to prevent infection or otherwise help.
- Ensure consistency with response partners.

Information Approval Process

Public Health Seattle & King County (PHSKC) serves as the lead agency in King County for risk communications messaging and public education regarding the medical aspect of and medical response to an influenza pandemic. Prior to the activation of the City's Emergency Coordination Center (ECC), PHSKC will follow its standard internal information development process as the primary focus is on what residents and businesses need to do to prepare for a pandemic including pandemic health etiquette. The City of Redmond through the ESF 15 Public Affairs Primary Agency will coordinate with PHSKC to ensure consistency of communications and education messaging regarding pandemic influenza on any information the City disseminates internally (to staff and managers) or externally through standard emergency communication tools (television, radio, etc.).

When the Redmond ECC is at activation levels A or B for a Pandemic Influenza incident all communications releases will follow the standard ECC/ICS approval process before release.

Planning and Preparedness

Communication planning and preparedness for an influenza pandemic is of paramount importance. Because communications in this context are complicated by overlapping authorities, multiple perspectives, multiple stakeholders, and the threat of dire consequences, including loss of life, key issues must be resolved during the early stages when staff and stakeholders are more available for deliberations and development work. The City must complete the following communications tasks:

- Determine intra- and inter-agency communications roles. A pandemic is distinguished by both medical and emergency management messages that must be communicated throughout the incident, often by different spokespersons representing different organizations. All stakeholders in the process must determine:
 - ✓ Who is responsible for final approval of the content?
 - ✓ How is content vetted for both technical accuracy and psychosocial impacts?
 - ✓ Who needs to be involved in the internal review?
 - ✓ Who is the primary spokesperson?
 - ✓ How do responsibilities change once an emergency is proclaimed?

The consensus and approval of the Mayor on these processes is important to a successful outcome.

- Develop and disseminate internal and external public education and public information materials through multiple communications channels. This includes:
 - ✓ Translating into other languages suitable for all City residents.
 - ✓ Customizing where necessary for special needs populations.
 - ✓ Following up to ensure communications have been effective.
- At the outset, proactively build and maintain relationships with critical community partners and purveyors of information to citizens of Redmond, including the media, City agencies, other governmental agencies, non-profit and community organizations, elected officials, unions, faith-based organizations, representatives of vulnerable populations and other advocacy groups, the health care community, businesses, and others in the private sector.
- Train key staff and elected officials in crisis communications and the criticality of maintaining credible communications.
- Participate in exercises and drills to strengthen readiness. Practice emergency communications scenarios with personnel from other City departments
- Review and revise where needed emergency management plans to facilitate a fast transition to emergency communications roles when a pandemic occurs.
- Prepare basic template/draft scripts, public service announcements, press releases, fact sheets, and talking points, and vet those with stakeholders in advance of the pandemic.

- Pre-test emergency materials and messages.
- Build trust by regularly communicating with partners and stakeholders who can help with emergency information dissemination.

Key Influencers

Key influencers play a critical role in helping the City prepare for a pandemic and in informing and preparing their own stakeholders and communities. These key influencers are:

- City elected officials, especially the Mayor;
- Public Health representatives and the larger medical community;
- Senior department leadership staff (agency heads, division leaders);
- Labor representatives
- Church and other faith-based organization leaders;
- Leaders in non-English speaking communities;
- Community service providers;
- Business associations;
- Daycare and childcare providers.

The City should plan to leverage these key influencers to assist in communicating critical information to Redmond residents, business owners, and staff about the influenza pandemic and how to respond to it. In the early communication stages of an influenza pandemic, key influencers can play a vital role in informing and assisting their own clients and stakeholders to prepare. During the later stages, their equally critical role will be to dispel rumors and misinformation, provide leadership, hope and emotional support, and encourage and reinforce community-sustaining behaviors.

Key influencers can help stakeholders, including Redmond residents and City staff, to:

- Recognize the severity of the crisis and its consequences.
- Understand the importance of adhering to prevention and mitigation measures.
- Initiate and maintain a rational response.
- Support medical, community and other primary responders.

Critical Messaging

During a pandemic, the City, in collaboration with King County, PHSKC, and key influencers, must communicate three critical messages:

- What PHSKC and the City of Redmond and others in the region are doing to reduce illness and death and minimize societal disruption;
- What the City of Redmond is doing to monitor and maintain essential services for City agencies and in support of key businesses and neighborhood needs;
- What the public can do to reduce illness and death and minimize societal disruption.

For example, Public Health currently provides timely and helpful information and advice about how individuals can protect their own health and what to do if they, family members, or others become ill. If a pandemic is proclaimed, the City of Redmond will provide timely information on the status of essential City services and how the City is working to help citizens and businesses during this crisis.

Key Spokespersons

PHSKC leadership (the Director of Public Health, the Director of Communicable Disease Control, or comparable PHSKC health authorities) shall be the spokespersons around all health and medical aspects of a pandemic. In that regard, they shall provide information directly to consumers as well as to key influencers, including the City of Redmond.

As the chief elected official in the City of Redmond, the Mayor, or his designee, shall provide information to citizens, employees, and business owners on the status of essential City services and on what the City is doing to help Redmond prepare for and respond to a pandemic. City directors and managers shall use this information both internally with their staff and labor representatives and externally with other key stakeholders in support of the overall public education and information process.

The City of Redmond, PHSKC, and King County must work together to engage key influencers. Coordinated efforts will ensure consistency of messages, minimize confusion and make the best use of community partners’ time. **Table 1** lists messages by pandemic phase and targeted audience.

Table 1: Key Message by Pandemic Phase
(Each Activation Level includes messages from the previous Activation Level)

AUDIENCE	ACTIVATION LEVEL A MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL B MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL C MESSAGES	RECOVERY MESSAGES <i>(in addition to messages from Level C)</i>
All Audiences	<p>We must all be responsive</p> <p>We understand the seriousness of the situation</p>	<p>Here is the situation status, content formatted to specific audience</p> <p>Here is what we need you to do to help us respond</p> <p>We understand how serious this may become</p>	<p>How we all prepare and respond can influence outcomes. Being prepared will lessen the impact</p> <p>We are planning for a serious situation</p>	<p>We must assess the initial impacts and prepare for the next wave</p>

AUDIENCE	ACTIVATION LEVEL A MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL B MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL C MESSAGES	RECOVERY MESSAGES <i>(in addition to messages from Level C)</i>
City Depts. and elected officials		<p>You are crucial</p> <p>Public information has been prepared</p> <p>We are responding to myths and rumors with facts</p> <p>Maintaining public order is critical</p> <p>We have disseminated information for residents and businesses</p>	<p>Solicit feedback from influencers to confirm that messages are effectively reaching people</p> <p>Public information has been prepared</p>	<p>Your constituents will be looking to you for input/direction</p> <p>Full recovery will take a long time</p> <p>We are working to support businesses</p>
Community Service Providers		<p>Tell us what you need</p> <p>You are crucial</p>	<p>Are you prepared or are there places you need support from the City or other governmental agencies?</p>	
Unions	<p>You are crucial</p> <p>Tell us what you need</p>	<p>City government and health officials have been planning for this for several years</p> <p>Our elected leaders understand the seriousness of the situation</p> <p>Decisive and quick action is needed- follow leadership direction</p> <p>We understand your members may be under a great deal of stress. We want to support you while they help maintain essential services.</p>	<p>We need you to help remind people what's coming and how to prepare for it</p> <p>Develop pre- planned materials to help with timely and consistent communications</p> <p>Your family and neighborhood preparedness can reduce the impact</p> <p>Be aware of workers' needs</p>	

AUDIENCE	ACTIVATION LEVEL A MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL B MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL C MESSAGES	RECOVERY MESSAGES <i>(in addition to messages from Level C)</i>
Unions Continued		<p>Please let us know if there are ways we can make our messages more accessible and clear and make your job easier.</p> <p>Your stakeholders will be looking to you for input/direction</p> <p>Prepare for changes in workplace policy</p>		
Business Associations		<p>We are all in this together</p>	<p>Especially for small businesses, this presents a significant threat to your viability</p> <p>Create a Business Continuity Plan to reduce the impact</p> <p>Workplaces are a key information channel for people</p> <p>Create communication strategies through business oriented communications channels to help spread the word</p>	<p>Full recovery will take a long time</p> <p>We are working to support business</p>
Media	<p>Here is what we need you to do to help us respond</p> <p>Give 24-hour access to key spokesperson</p> <p>Broadcast outlets are absolutely critical due to their ability to provide live, unedited messages directly from the City</p>	<p>Let's work out the best ways we can communicate with each other during this time</p> <p>What is a good time to establish a regular daily news conference to provide information updates and reinforce key messages and safety tips</p>	<p>We will provide you with a list of credible information sources</p> <p>We need you to help remind people what's coming and how to prepare for it</p> <p>Develop pre-planned materials to help with timely and consistent communications</p>	

AUDIENCE	ACTIVATION LEVEL A MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL B MESSAGES	ACTIVATION LEVEL C MESSAGES	RECOVERY MESSAGES <i>(in addition to messages from Level C)</i>
		<p>You are a critical lifeline between us and the community. Your good reporting will help ensure citizens understand what's going on, what they can do to protect themselves, and what the City is doing</p> <p>Please let us know if there are ways we can make our messages more accessible and clear and make your job easier. What do you need?</p>		
Churches and Other Faith-based Organizations	Maintain two-way communication with leadership	<p>You can help people remain calm and stable during times of great stress</p> <p>We have been planning for a pandemic</p> <p>We must all be responsive</p> <p>We need to look after one another</p>	<p>You are crucial in helping to get our communities prepared, especially for those individuals who depend on your organization</p> <p>Are you prepared or are there places you need support from the City or other governmental agencies</p> <p>Educate and inform around the current pandemic threat</p>	<p>Full recovery will take a long time</p> <p>Social service and faith-based organizations are critical</p>
Community Leaders	<p>You can help people remain calm and stable during times of great stress</p> <p>We must all be responsive</p> <p>We are all in this together</p>	<p>We have been planning for a pandemic</p> <p>City departments have plans to maintain essential functions</p>	<p>It is very important to become educated so you will know what to expect and how you need to respond</p>	<p>Full recovery will take a long time</p>

Phasing of Key Messages

Each level of ECC activation will require a different emphasis in terms of the messages the City conveys. All messages should adhere to risk communications principles.

Table 2 provides a summary of topics by phase and audience.

Table B-2: Pandemic Communication Topics

Activation Level	Topics for General Public	Topics for City Employees
A	Proclamation of a pandemic influenza emergency Use of City's plan including continual attention to the circumstances by City Leaders Explanation of change in Alert Phase Alternate care sites Antiviral medication distribution Pandemic influenza information and prevention Healthy behaviors that help to limit the spread of the flu Use of public transportation Bereavement and mental health support services Social distancing measures Mortuary services Caring for ill at home Role of law enforcement Role of Medic 1/9-1-1	Direction for the implementation of social distancing Work rules, including alternative work schedules, telecommuting, and others Staff redeployment Hiring contingent or temporary workers Administration of volunteers Facility closure/ reduction in force Compensation and employee pay policies Benefit Plan changes Leave administration School and daycare closures Discipline for conduct including unauthorized absences Life insurance and other survivor benefits
B	Explanation of change in Alert Phase Pandemic influenza overview and response Healthy behaviors that help to limit the	Social Distancing Work rules, including alternative work schedules, telecommuting, and others Remote access and technical support

<p>B continued</p>	<p>spread of flu</p> <p>Use of City's plan including continual attention to the circumstances by City leaders</p> <p>Prepare for changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School/daycare closures -Social distancing -Health care access and standards of care -Caring for ill at home 	<p>Administration of volunteers (e.g. identification of functions where volunteers could complement City resources with initiatives such as neighborhood preparedness)</p> <p>Compensation and employee pay policies</p> <p>Leave administration</p> <p>School and daycare closures</p> <p>Family care plans and options</p> <p>Activate Lines of Succession</p> <p>Mask guidance</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>Pandemic influenza history, overview, and response</p> <p>Healthy behaviors that are effective in limiting the spread of respiratory illnesses</p> <p>Preparedness Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prepare to get by at home for at least one week, ideally longer -Stock up on food, water, medicine, and other supplies -Make plans for childcare if schools and daycares close -Know work policies for sick leave and working from home 	<p>Department/Division leadership lines of succession</p> <p>Identification of essential services</p> <p>Compensation and employee pay policies</p> <p>Social distancing</p> <p>Work rules, including alternative work schedules, telecommuting, and others</p> <p>Remote access and technical support</p> <p>Leave administration</p> <p>Employee Assistance Program</p> <p>Family care plans and options</p>
<p>Recovery</p>	<p>Statement that pandemic influenza period is ending</p> <p>Preparation for recurrences</p> <p>Normal availability of local health care system</p> <p>Pandemic influenza prevention techniques</p> <p>Healthy behaviors that help to limit the spread of flu</p> <p>Bereavement and mental health support services</p>	<p>Identification of City functions which may be brought back into full service</p> <p>Employee return-to-work instructions</p> <p>After Actions and Lessons Learned Reports</p>