



Pandemic Preparedness Planning Guidelines

Issue Date: February 8, 2010

Authority

The Emergency Planning Act

The Cabinet Directive on Provincial Emergency Planning (c. 1999)

CIC Board Minute # 010/2010

Applicability

This policy is applicable to CIC and CIC subsidiary Crown corporations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to prompt CIC and CIC subsidiary Crown corporations to action in undertaking development of Crown corporation-specific pandemic preparedness plans. Pandemic planning is an element of effective emergency preparedness planning and is intended to help prepare the organization to effectively face an emergency pandemic situation (see Appendix A for a list of criteria common to all emergency plans). This policy does not offer detailed information about organizational pandemic planning. Rather, the policy is intended to assist pandemic planners with formulating comprehensive, flexible and adaptive plans that are tailored to the unique business circumstances of individual Crown corporations. Effective pandemic planning should enhance the ability of a Crown corporation to limit disruption, respond efficiently and recover effectively in the event of a pandemic.

Policy Statements

All Government of Saskatchewan Ministries, Agencies and Crown corporations are mandated to develop internal emergency preparedness plans in accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on Provincial Emergency Planning* (c. 1999). Consistent with this mandate CIC and all CIC subsidiary Crown corporations must complete and maintain comprehensive pandemic preparedness plans that will enable the Crown corporation to maintain, to whatever extent is reasonable under the circumstances, the provision of goods and services core to the Crown corporation's business mandate. Comprehensive Crown sector pandemic preparedness plans will include a broad corporate-level component that may be shared with the public and more detailed operational-level planning elements that are not intended to be shared with the public.

The first part of a Crown corporation pandemic preparedness plan will offer an overview of the pandemic influenza threat including the characteristics of a pandemic influenza, the differences from the seasonal influenza, some discussion about vaccines and anti-viral agents, and preventative measures that individuals can take to possibly slow the transmission of pandemic influenza (e.g. social distancing, self-isolation when ill, frequent hand washing, coughing etiquette). The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health may be a good source of relevant information to help prepare the introductory section of the corporate pandemic plan. This part of the plan might also refer to international, national, provincial and local perspectives on characterizing the different phases of a pandemic, and acknowledge that the Crown corporation pandemic preparedness plan is primarily informed by key health information provided by (a) the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, and (b) Health Canada.

Crown corporations are in the business of providing a suite of goods and services to Saskatchewan people. Some of these services, including water, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications, are basic and integral to the proper functioning of society. Thus, with health and safety issues broadly described at the beginning of the plan, the main part of the Crown corporation's pandemic preparedness plan should address business continuity, identifying the business's key functions and the key personnel in charge of those functions. Within each key functional area, plans should describe detailed departmental and business unit plans recognizing any critical linkages across functional areas. Plans should also identify contingency plans for sustaining basic functions and critical infrastructure in case of the loss of certain systems such as basic utility services and information technology services. Planning should recognize supply chains and the fact that purchasing some supplies might need to be expedited in the event of a pandemic. Supply shortages, fuel delivery interruptions and various delays in communicating with a variety of stakeholders could all occur during an emergency. Effective contingency planning will accommodate at least some level of disruption of supplies and services and will seek to maintain critical infrastructure.

While planning for a pandemic is important, planning alone is not enough to ensure that the Crown corporation will be ready in the event of a serious pandemic situation affecting Saskatchewan. Therefore, the Crown corporation's plan must be tested and rehearsed. Rehearsing offers the opportunity to test roles and responsibilities under various scenarios including identifying the information and communications that would be necessary to function effectively in a given situation. Rehearsing the plan allows participants to identify both the strengths and weaknesses in the plan and to adjust accordingly.

Once completed in draft form, the pandemic preparedness plan should be reviewed and approved by the Crown corporation's senior management. A copy of the approved plan should be sent to the Ministry of Government Relations, Office of Emergency Management and Fire Safety (EMFS), for formal assessment. The EMFS Office will scrutinize the plan according to an established set of evaluation criteria and will provide comments back to the Crown corporation in the form of a Planning Review Report. Upon request, EMFS can meet with individual Crown corporations to assist in revising the approved plan (the EMFS is also available to assist at earlier stages in the planning process). Finalized plans (approved by management, reviewed by the EMFS Office and incorporating final revisions) should be provided to CIC for the information of the CIC Board of Directors. The corporate-level pandemic preparedness plan should also be posted to the corporation's public web site (ensuring first that privacy issues are addressed and that confidential business information is protected). Crown corporation pandemic preparedness plans may also be shared among CIC subsidiary Crown corporations.

General Provisions

Guiding Principles

- Written in clear, plain and concise language that can be readily interpreted by the corporate user and by an informed public
- Does not overuse corporate or emergency planning jargon and acronyms
- Is a business tool, and not confined to being a communications product with promotional messages and language
- The plan is easy to access and reference by those who will use it
- The plan recognizes interdependencies and includes provisions to maintain these interdependencies in a pandemic emergency
- The plan is a living document that is continuously revised as information and circumstances change

Primary Benefits of Creating a Pandemic Preparedness Plan

In the event of a serious pandemic, the benefits of robust pandemic preparedness plans include the following:

- Clear responsibilities and accountability for action is established and secondary chains of command have been considered;
- Effective communication and collaboration has occurred between departments and business units within the Crown corporation;
- Interdependencies outside the organization have been recognized and addressed; and
- Confidence has been established that the Crown corporation has prepared as best as it can for possible uncertain events.

Reference Sources Cited in Preparing these Guidelines

Business Continuity Planning Guide for Influenza Pandemic, Business Development Bank of Canada

Influenza Pandemic: Continuity Planning Guide for Canadian Businesses, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

Business Continuity Management: Planning Guidelines, 2006, Government of Saskatchewan

Business Continuity Management Good Practice Guidelines, 2008, Business Continuity Institute

American College Health Association Pandemic Guidelines, 2006, ACHA Task Force for Pandemic Planning

Pandemic Planning: A Guide for Government Ministries, Agencies and Crown corporations (draft), September 2007, SaskEMO

Administrative Information

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Reviewed: June 15, 2015

Appendix A

Criteria for Developing Emergency Preparedness Plans

- All relevant legislation and governing documents are referenced and the plan identifies strategies for addressing all mandated responsibilities.
- Discussions with partners and stakeholders are ongoing to ensure that all parties work together in a coordinated manner to respond to the pandemic emergency. By working together, organizations can limit overlap, ensure consistency and promote cooperation and mutual understanding.
- The plan identifies strategies for regular maintenance and revision. The plan is a living document that will need to be updated as information and circumstances change.
- A strategy for training and exercising the plan is present. This includes education/information sessions with staff and identifying formal trigger points to activate the plan.
- The plan identifies relationships with other relevant Ministries, Agencies and Crown corporations, as well as the private sector. These interdependencies need to be discussed and noted in each dependent's plan and each needs to be aware of the other's expectations and needs.
- The plan has copies of relevant notification lists, contingency plans, templates, etc., attached as appendices. This information needs to be kept current and easily accessible.
- An appropriate Hazard and Risk assessment has been undertaken and is reflected in the plan. Each organization has different levels of risk when faced with an emergency. Accordingly, each plan must be reflective of that assessment.
- The plan identifies organizational roles and responsibilities during an emergency. It is essential that all personnel are aware of their roles before the plan is activated.
- A process for feedback from operational staff is important. Staff input will ensure that the plan is workable and inclusive.
- A communication strategy is identified in the plan to communicate with employees, stakeholders and partners before, during and after the emergency. Through this strategy, key messages regarding elements of the emergency plan and business operations can be disseminated.
- The plan needs to incorporate a business continuity element in order to ensure that the organization can continue meeting its business obligations during an emergency.