



Administration Directive No. 44

October, 2011-2012

**PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

# PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN

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Please Note: Appendices D-G have been excluded from the WEB version.

# PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN

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Business continuity planning for the utility industry requires preparing for the full range of threats. One threat is the possibility of an influenza pandemic. A pandemic is defined as a global outbreak when a new virus is able to be transmitted between humans resulting in serious illness and death worldwide. A pandemic event could impact a large percentage of the population and could last for several weeks to a few months. Benton PUD (the District) recognizes the need to prepare for such an event to minimize its negative impact on both the District's employees and customers.

## PURPOSE

The District provides an essential service to its customers. It is the District's responsibility to maintain its system so that customers receive electricity, broadband, and other energy-related services at all times. The following procedures have been established in an effort to protect employees' health and safety while limiting the impact on services provided to the District's customers.

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

This policy will be enacted by the General Manager or designee when advised by the Benton Franklin Health District that a pandemic is imminent or based upon employee illness rates. Each section of this policy may be implemented independently as directed by the General Manager or designee.

## PROCEDURES

### Section 1. Workforce Deployment

Each District department has identified its own pandemic response plan in the event of a declared pandemic event; however, in the event

that it is necessary to deploy employees to work in other areas of the District, the following will apply:

- 1) For the duration of a pandemic event, the District and the union commit to working together to ensure critical services are provided to customers, resolving any issues in labor management after the event when practical and in accordance with the principles of existing policies and the collective bargaining agreement.
- 2) If a need is identified in a critical area of the District, qualified employees from any location or classification may be assigned based on business need to perform the necessary work during the pandemic event, regardless of seniority.
- 3) For the duration of the pandemic event, qualified management employees may also perform work to ensure critical services are provided to customers.

### Section 2. Travel

Essential work-related domestic travel by employees will be limited and must be approved by the General Manager, or designee; nonessential work-related domestic travel will be eliminated for the duration of the pandemic event.

Based on the health risk to their families and co-workers, employees will be encouraged to limit personal travel.

### Section 3. Sick Hotline

Once the General Manager has declared that absenteeism has reached a substantive level impacting District business, Human Resources will be directed to activate a Sick Hotline. The hotline number (582-1249 or 582-2175, then 9) will be communicated to all employees, and the hotline will be directed to Human Resources.

Normal departmental absence procedures will be followed during a pandemic. Employees must notify their supervisor to report an absence prior to the start of their shift. The supervisor will call the hotline to document the absence. In the event that the employee is unable to reach their supervisor, they should call the hotline directly to report their absence. The hotline will be used to report absences related to both the employee's own illness and that of a family member if it results in the absence of the employee. Once the Sick Hotline has been activated, all pandemic - related absences must be reported on the hotline including partial day absences until such time as the Sick Hotline has been deactivated

Human Resources staff will check the hotline several times a day and record the illness in the Sick Log. Human Resources staff will assist with any necessary leave of absence paperwork and track the absence for possible Short Term Disability eligibility (see Appendix F).

#### **Section 4. Employee Updates**

Communications will be responsible for regular updates to all employees via email, intranet and other communications tools regarding pandemic status, community issues, advisories, etc.

#### **Section 5. Personal Leave**

Any employee who is absent due to his/her own illness or an illness of his/her spouse, child, or parent during a declared pandemic will follow existing District policies unless otherwise specified in this Pandemic Plan. An exception to the existing policy may be approved for employees who are eligible to telecommute and meet all of the standards of Section 7.

In order to protect the healthy workforce, management will have the right to send employees home who are ill. Supervisors must immediately report this action by calling the sick hotline at 582-1249, and Human Resources will log the illness in the Sick Log and assist with any leave of absence paperwork.

As an exception to normal policy, employees may opt to use either any available accrued paid leave or take leave without pay (LWOP). Employees utilizing LWOP do not accrue additional Personal Leave or receive deferred compensation matching and must ensure Payroll has timely receipt of employee benefit deductions applicable to each payroll without going into arrears.

Employees sent home due to illnesses who believe they are fit for duty / work may return to work once they have obtained the appropriate medical clearance submitted on the District Return to Work form and are approved by Human Resources to return.

#### **Section 6. Social Distancing**

Essential meetings will be limited and will be attended by the fewest possible employees. Precaution must be taken to avoid transmission of the flu virus by limiting frequency and types of face-to-face contact (e.g. avoid handshaking and utilize masks) among employees and between employees and customers.

#### **Section 7. Telecommuting**

If a pandemic event is declared, the District's Executive Management Team will decide which employees can be assigned to telecommute in order to reduce additional exposure and to ensure continued service to its customers. Supervisors, or their designees, will be responsible for issuing all telecommuting assignments (see telecommuting eligibility list). General responsibilities of supervisors and their telecommuting employees are outlined below:

- 1) Only certain positions are eligible for telecommuting as approved by the Director.
- 2) Telecommuting will be allowed based solely on the business needs of the District, not for the convenience of the employee. If a position is eligible for telecommuting, the supervisor must make a daily assessment as to whether the work to be performed by the employee is essential to District need and sufficiently measurable or able to be assessed for completion without direct supervision. Accordingly, telecommuting must be specifically authorized by the supervisor for each day worked. That daily authorization may occur the prior evening.
- 3) Overtime must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. The District overtime policy (in Administration Directive No. 35, Hours of Work and Timesheets) for nonunion, exempt & nonexempt employees will apply. Overtime as outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement will apply to all union, hourly employees who telecommute.
- 4) The supervisor or designee will ensure that prior to any pandemic declaration, any employee who may be assigned to telecommute has the proper signed policies,

equipment, accesses, and connections in place for employees to telecommute and has completed any necessary training required in order to perform their duties from their residences. An individual who holds a position eligible for telecommuting must have a high-speed internet connection. Generally, the District will not reimburse an employee for a high-speed connection.

- 5) An employee who is telecommuting must work to be paid. The employee must be working at their telecommuting workstation except for short breaks or meal periods. Meal periods are not compensated. The supervisor or designee must set parameters for regular communication with his/her employees via e-mail, conference calls, video-conference, on-line meetings, etc.
- 6) In most cases, telecommunicating employees are on the "honor" system. This does not preclude the District from verifying that the employee is at their home workstation by calling the employee, checking VPN access times, or by any other means. The supervisor may also monitor the work product. If a work assignment that is expected to be completed within a period of time is not completed without adequate explanation, the supervisor may remove the employee from the eligibility list for telecommuting. It is understood that some modifications in work outcomes may occur due to the telecommuting situation.
- 7) Employees will be required to comply with all District policies even though they are performing work from their residences.
- 8) Employees will be covered by all federal, state, and local laws while working from their residences and on their approved work schedule. The District is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors and others in the employee's residence while working.
- 9) Voice Mail - Employees are instructed to call in and check their messages several times a day. This is an important operating protocol for any virtual work team or individual.
- 10) Privacy and Confidentiality - Employees are instructed to utilize District resources to dispose of all non-retainable District-related records and documentation generated while telecommuting.

## Section 8. Work Schedules

When a pandemic event is declared, modifications may be made to employee work schedules to facilitate social distancing, ensure critical services are met, or for other reasons. In addition, partial or full facility closure may result in reduction of work of some employees.

**Alternate Work Schedules (AWS)** - AWS may be cancelled temporarily without notice, including AWS for bargaining unit employees. The District will work with employees to address previously scheduled activities on AWS days off, and determine the appropriate date of cancellation to best meet Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements. Following closure of the pandemic event, employees may resume AWS schedules at the start of a pay period when notified by management.

**Previously Scheduled Time Off** - Employees with previously scheduled personal leave or other time off may be required to work during a pandemic event due to business need, except when such time off is due to Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) time off.

**Nonstandard Work Schedules** - With mutual agreement, employees may be assigned nonstandard work schedules, including but not limited to early or late starts, split shifts, etc. Work schedules will remain 8 regular work hours in one day (or an applicable number of work hours for those on AWS).

**Full or Partial Facility Closure** - If a portion of the facility is closed (i.e., the lobby closed to walk-in customers) no employees will be asked to go home due to lack of work. Employees may be reassigned to other responsibilities temporarily.

In the event of a larger scale facility closure, such as an order by a government official, the General Manager or designee will determine whether employees may remain working and in what capacity. Bargaining-unit employees sent home due to lack of work will be paid according to applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement terms for that day and allowed to use either paid time off, such as personal leave and comp time, or LWOP. Other employees will be paid according to the Personal Leave policies in effect and applicable to the employee's FLSA status (exempt or nonexempt from overtime).

## Section 9. Personal Protective Equipment

HEPA masks, latex/vinyl gloves, hand sanitizers, and disinfectants will be available to employees. When an employee's job requires he or she to have contact with the public or public facilities, the supervisor may require that an employee wear a respirator and latex/vinyl gloves. After any such contact, employees should wash their hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer to cleanse their hands.

Once it becomes evident that a pandemic is imminent, employees will be provided training and/or informational materials on the proper use and care of proper personal protective equipment being utilized.

Employees who utilize shared equipment or workstations must use a disinfectant to wipe down the equipment and surfaces before and after each shift. Examples include: telephones, keyboards, pens/pencils, desk tops, hand-held work equipment, or a vehicle's steering wheel. In addition, antibacterial wands will be made available to be used on equipment that may be difficult to properly disinfect through other means.

## Section 10. Employee Flu Questionnaire

Answer the questions below to determine if the symptoms you are having could be the flu.

- 1) Do you have a fever? A temperature that is 99° or higher may indicate you have the flu. It is the most common characteristic. Chills usually accompany the fever.
- 2) Do you have a headache or body aches? This may include backache or joint pain. It is a very common symptom and may become severe at times.
- 3) Do you have fatigue or weakness? Extreme exhaustion is one of the early and most prominent signals of the flu. It can last as long as two to three weeks.
- 4) Do you have a cough or sore throat? A dry cough, often accompanied by chest pain, is more common of the flu but can sometimes become productive, meaning you are producing phlegm when you cough.
- 5) Have you lost your appetite?

If you think you have the flu, most people do best staying at home. Home care involves rest, plenty

of liquids, and taking non-aspirin fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol. Most people are infectious from the day before they have symptoms until at least 24 hours after the fever is back to normal without using fever-reducing medication.

Seek medical care for the following:

For Children	For Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast breathing or trouble breathing</li> <li>• Fever with rash</li> <li>• Bluish skin color</li> <li>• Not drinking enough fluids</li> <li>• Not waking up</li> <li>• Irritable</li> <li>• Symptoms improve but return or get worse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath</li> <li>• Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen</li> <li>• Sudden dizziness</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Severe or persistent vomiting</li> </ul>

## Section 11. Symptoms - Supervisor Evaluation Criteria

Employees may be asked to consider going home if they exhibit signs of the flu or flu-like symptoms. Employees refusing to leave may be sent by a member of management for a fitness for duty assessment by an occupational health provider at the District's expense. The employee will be on paid administrative leave until an assessment is made. Employees exhibiting flu or flu-like symptoms will be deemed unfit for duty and will be sent home on paid time off, such as personal leave and comp time, or LWOP at the employee's choice. Otherwise, the employee may return to regular duty.

**Symptoms** – A supervisor may send an employee home if they are exhibiting any the following flu symptoms:

Fever	Cough
Sore throat	Runny or stuffy nose
Body aches	Headache
Chills and fatigue	Diarrhea and vomiting

If an employee is sent home due to illness, the supervisor must immediately report on the Hotline at 582-1249. Human Resources will log the illness in the Sick Log and assist with any necessary leave of absence paperwork or fitness for duty assessments when applicable.

**Reference**

Resolution No. 2056 – **Authorizing the General Manager to Declare a Pandemic Event**

Approved by:



James W. Sanders, General Manager

Approved by:



Chad B. Bartram, AGM/Director of Finance  
and Business Services

# APPENDIX A: DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

## Declaration of Emergency

WHEREAS, the Public Utility District No. 1 of Benton County (the District) provides services that are essential to the well-being and livelihoods of the people it serves; AND

WHEREAS, the District seeks to promote employee wellness and minimize opportunities for employees to be exposed to an influenza disease while at work; AND

WHEREAS, a wide-spread illness among District employees may impact the provision of essential services to customers; AND

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution No. 2056 on September 22, 2009, authorizing the General Manager to declare a Pandemic Emergency Event and to suspend certain existing Commission policies during such an event for the purpose of mitigating the impact of a pandemic on employees and customers; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 2056 directs the General Manager to notify the Commission when a Pandemic Emergency Event has been declared and when existing Commission policies have been suspended; AND

WHEREAS, current conditions meet one or both of the following criteria:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The Benton Franklin Health District has advised that a pandemic is imminent
- \_\_\_\_\_ District employee absenteeism prevents business continuity under existing policies

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to Resolution No. 2056, the General Manager, or designee, is declaring that a Pandemic Emergency Event exists, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

This Declaration of a *Pandemic Emergency Event* remains in force until canceled.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*General Manager or Designee*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

*Notification to Board of Commissioners:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Method of notification*

*Cancellation of Pandemic Emergency Event:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*General Manager of Designee*

**Resolution**

RESOLUTION NO. 2056

September 22, 2009

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION OF  
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 OF BENTON COUNTY  
AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER TO DECLARE A PANDEMIC EVENT  
AND  
ESTABLISHING CERTAIN AUTHORITIES FOR THE GENERAL MANAGER  
DURING A PANDEMIC EMERGENCY EVENT

WHEREAS, the Public Utility District No. 1 of Benton County (the District) provides services that are essential to the well-being and livelihoods of the people it serves; AND

WHEREAS, an influenza pandemic could impact a large percentage of the population and last for several weeks to a few months; AND

WHEREAS, the District seeks to promote employee wellness and minimize opportunities for employees to be exposed to the disease while at work; AND

WHEREAS, a wide-spread illness among District employees may impact the provision of essential services to customers; AND

WHEREAS, the District recognizes the need to prepare for such an event to minimize its negative impact on both the District's employees and customers; AND

WHEREAS, the circumstances and conditions of a Pandemic Emergency Event are difficult to predict and may occur unexpectedly; AND

WHEREAS, in order to adequately respond to a pandemic emergency, it is appropriate to provide flexibility to the General Manager in declaring a Pandemic Emergency Event and implementing certain temporary policies identified in the District's Pandemic Preparedness Plan;

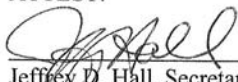
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, By the Commission of Public Utility District No. 1 of Benton County, Washington that the General Manager is authorized to declare a Pandemic Emergency Event based upon information provided by the Benton-Franklin Health District or based upon District employee illness rates; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That for the duration of the Pandemic Emergency Event, the General Manager is authorized to suspend certain existing Commission policies for the purpose of mitigating the impact of the pandemic on employees and customers; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the General Manager shall notify the Commission when a Pandemic Emergency Event has been declared and when existing Commission policies are suspended; AND

Lori Kays-Sanders, President

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey D. Hall, Secretary

# APPENDIX B: ANNUAL PREPARATION

## SEASONAL ACTIONS - THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN ANNUALLY

WHEN	WHO	GOALS
<b>June - August</b>	Business Continuity Team <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet to review Pandemic Plan and recommend changes, as needed</li> <li>Review resource documents to maintain current standards and links</li> <li>Meet with the IBEW to review Plan changes if any; update LOA</li> </ul>
<b>August - April</b>	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement communications plan to educate employees about pandemic preparation efforts</li> </ul>
<b>September - April</b>	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide employees information about preparation for flu season (Safety Coordinator, Health Department, Insurance Provider, etc.)</li> <li>Schedule opportunities for flu shots for employees and communicate to employees; determine District reimbursement or direct payment budget</li> <li>Encourage employees not to report to work when ill and to remain home until symptoms are gone</li> <li>Publicize and activate, when approved by the Leadership Team, the Sick Hotline to employees, supervisors, managers; report regular metrics</li> </ul>
<b>September</b>	Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review configuration of remote access system for the District's network and communicate any changes to employees</li> <li>Move toward paperless operations with only permanent documents to be archived</li> <li>Establish call forwarding systems for telephones to be answered at home</li> <li>Provide remote access training for telecommuting</li> </ul>
<b>October-April</b>	Buildings & Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stock all restrooms and meeting rooms with hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, facial tissues, masks</li> <li>Minimize person-to-person cross-contamination from restroom doors by providing paper towels to open the door along with a disposal can or by assuring all doors open outward.</li> <li>Place posters conveying flu prevention messages in all restrooms and meeting rooms</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deactivate, if applicable, Sick Hotline and communicate to employees, supervisors and managers</li> </ul>
<b>Post-Pandemic</b>	Business Continuity Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the pandemic, all procedures and policies related to pandemic response would be examined for effectiveness and modified to prepare the District for a similar event in the future. This post-pandemic review is especially important as the flu or other pandemic may come in waves</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> P. Ball, C. Bartram, S. Gale, K. Miller, D. Pryor, G. Splattstoesser, J. Swanson, A. Walsh, J. White, D. Bickford, J. Henderson

# APPENDIX C: PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

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The following pandemic planning assumptions are taken from the **Electricity Sector Influenza Pandemic Planning, Preparation and Response Reference Guide**, developed by the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC):

1. The timing of the outbreak of a pandemic is uncertain and depends on many factors.
2. Once human to human transmission begins, the disease will spread very rapidly around the world within three to eight weeks.
3. Attack rate for the general population is expected to be in the range of 25% and these people would be very ill for up to a week.
4. Absentee rates for employees may be in the range of 35% for the duration of the pandemic due to illness and other factors such as needing to take care of family members. The pandemic could last for six months. Absentee rates will not be uniform across an organization and will be caused by employee illness as well as family care issues, inability to get to work, etc.
5. Persons who contract the virus are not expected to contract it a second time due to a buildup of immunity. However, if the virus mutates, recurrences for the same individual would be possible.
6. Personnel will need to be managed differently to conduct essential business processes and to minimize the spread of the virus.
7. Not enough anti-viral medicines or vaccines may be available for the entire population. There may be none in the early stages and then limited quantities for select populations. Anti-viral medicines, such as Tamiflu, present a variety of difficult issues such as availability, effectiveness against specific virus strains and dosage levels for pre-infection prevention as compared to post-infection treatment.
8. A pandemic could strike in multiple waves. Obtain updates from the Health Department on the pattern of flu for each season. It will be important to provide accurate and timely information to customers, employees, labor organizations and government before, during and after the pandemic.
9. Interdependencies with other segments of the electricity sector (generators, transmission operators, distribution providers) and other critical infrastructure (communications, transportation, emergency services, etc) as well as contractors and suppliers will be severely tested during an influenza pandemic.