Pandemic Preparedness for Business
A Guide to Preparing a
Business Disaster Plan
For Pandemic

Produced by:

In collaboration with:

Summary: This is an instructor's guide for a 90 minute course in which participants will learn about the importance of a disaster plan for pandemic, share ideas, and learn how to start a disaster plan for pandemic. This is a Level II business preparedness plan. For Level I, see "Ready Business," a basic business preparedness course at www.eden.lsu.edu

Instructors: Land Grant University specialists, Cooperative Extension Service educators and/or volunteers.

Cooperators: Anyone interested in helping small- and medium-sized businesses understand the importance of and need for businesses to plan for pandemic.

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Instructor's Notes:
This course is designed primarily for small businesses but may be useful for first-time or part-time business-continuity planners for medium- or larger business. Group size is variable from large lecture style to small group sessions with added discussion.

The Instructor's Guide (this document), PowerPoint are designed for any professional or volunteer who has business experience, business knowledge, or a business mentor in the classroom and a clear understanding of pandemic issues.
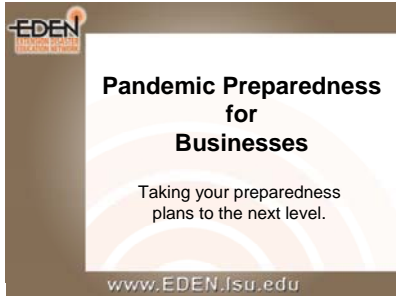
The course consists of:
- Course PowerPoint
- Instructor's Guide (this document)
- Documents
    - Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Checklists available at http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/businesschecklist.html
    - Other information on pandemics available at: www.pandemicflu.gov/

This Instructor's Guide is set up in two columns.
The right side shows what PowerPoint slides and handouts you should use in sequence.
The left side provides your talking points and group discussion points.

Section 1: What is pandemic flu?

**Pandemic Preparedness
for
Businesses**

Taking your preparedness
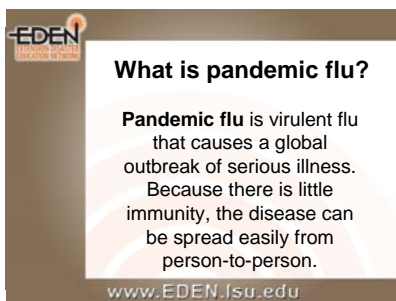plans to the next level.

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Section 1: What is pandemic flu?

Instructor's Notes
The goals of this course are:
- Introduce you to pandemic flu
- Provide reasons for disaster planning
- Provide "how to" tips on planning
- Share resources

Note: Depending on the situation you can elect to have participants introduce themselves and their business affiliation.
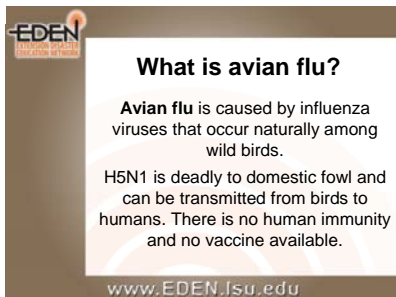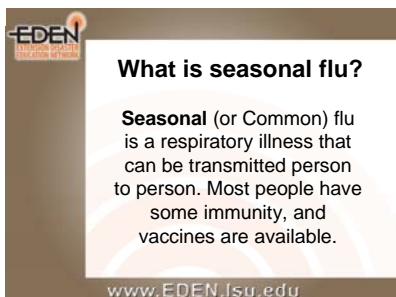
The next three slides differentiate between
- Pandemic
- Seasonal flu, and
- Avian influenza

The instructor can elect to visit the following Website for materials to download and handout.
http://www.pandemicflu.gov
or
http://eden.lsu.edu/pandemicflu

What is pandemic flu?

Pandemic flu is virulent flu that causes a global outbreak of serious illness. Because there is little immunity, the disease can be spread easily from person-to-person.

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What is seasonal flu?

Seasonal (or Common) flu is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and vaccines are available.

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What is avian flu?

Avian flu is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds.

H5N1 is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no human immunity and no vaccine available.

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Section 2: Businesses Play Key Roles

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Why Businesses are important
In the event of pandemic influenza, businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Planning for pandemic influenza is critical.

During recovery, businesses can help with communications, coordination, and contributions and volunteerism.

Communication will be critical
During the 1918 influenza pandemic, newspapers and word of mouth that carried the news and information. Today the media and Web will be our primary pre-pandemic and pandemic communication sources. Both must be used responsibly to inform and educate — to help achieve a nation prepared, but not in panic.

For the first time in history, we may know the details of the pandemic before it spreads. We may have more extensive communication and knowledge of what to do. An issue will be that many people will be "experts" and much will be communicated. Rather than a lack of information, people may not be able to sort out all communication. In the United States, the Department of Health and Human Services will be the key leader in communication.

Preplanning will increase the credibility of each institution in the event of a pandemic.

But if a pandemic happens, federal and state resources can provide information, but response actions will soon be overwhelmed. In fact, a disaster is an emergency that overwhelms local resources. A pandemic will likely overwhelm federal and world-wide resources. Response will be localized to community and family levels.

Businesses can help with:

- Communication
- Health and safety
- Financial stability

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Businesses can help with:
Communication – understanding what is going on.
Health and safety – providing some care and policies the promote health and recovery.
Financial – a business that plans for continuity of operations in a pandemic will likely be more successful if they plan for their employees' financial well-being.

Businesses can help with:

- Continue critical operations
- Provide healthy work places
- Provide healthy public transportation alternatives

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Business can help:
Because a pandemic will effect the economy, planning now will help businesses maintain important and needed services. This helps the business, employees, and ultimately the economy.

Businesses can help with:

- Remote working conditions
- Stabilized compensation
  – Loans
  – Access to retirement
  – Grants

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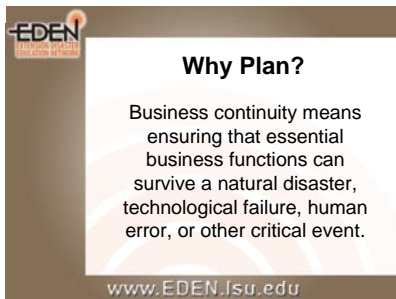
Businesses can help:
Where possible provide remote working locations to reduce exposure.

A pandemic team can preplan for strategic efforts to help employees obtain resources to get through the pandemic.
            - Loans
            - Access to retirement
   - Grants

# Section 3: Why Plan?

Section 3: Why Plan?

Why Plan?
In recent times, assuring business continuity has also meant planning for terrorist-related biological, chemical, or nuclear attacks.

Many existing business continuity plans anticipate disruptions such as fires, earthquakes, and floods; these events are restricted to a certain geographic area, and the time frames are fairly well defined and limited. Pandemic flu, however, demands a different set of continuity assumptions since it will be widely dispersed geographically and potentially arrive in waves that could last several months at a time. Some say, that a pandemic could equal 50 Katrina Hurricanes.
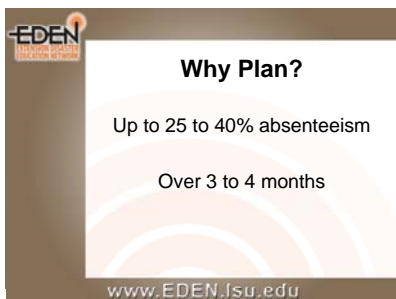
Depending on the flu strain and based on previous pandemics, public health officials project cumulative absentee rates of 25-40 percent over three to four months. Absentees will include sick employees, and those who must care for others who are sick. Fear will also impact rates of absenteeism.
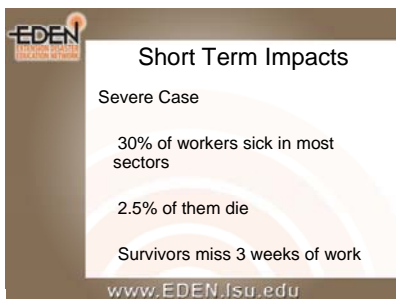
Let us look at a severe case of short term impacts. If we assume 30% of workers get sick in most sectors and 2.5% of them die. We can apply some costs for loss of economic accounts.

Apply the average worker productivity rates while the loss to the economy is $600 billion (in 2005) or 5% of the GDP.
In a normal year, the U.S. averages about $50-100 billion per year in overall disaster costs. A more severe pandemic would be like six years of normal, average disaster costs all in one year.

Mild Case

25% of workers sick in most sectors

0.1% of them die

Survivors miss 4 days of work

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Now let us look at a less severe case.
25% of workers are sick in most sectors while .1% of them may die. Any survivors will miss at least four days of work.

Mild case continued

Applying average worker productivity rates, loss to economy is:

$180 billion (2005$), or
1.5% of GDP

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Continuing in a less severe case $180 billion in 2005 or 1.5% of GDP is applied to the average worker productivity in loss to economy.

1. Medical Impacts

90,000 – 200,000 deaths

300,000 – 700,000 other hospitalizations

18 mil. – 42 mil. outpatient visits

20 mil. – 47 mil. other illnesses

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In addition to the loss of productivity, your business will incur medical care costs which would be a tremendous set back.

2. Costs

Total costs to U.S. economy

between $100 billion and $215

billion (2005 $)

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These are estimates for medical treatments and recovery. They would be above the costs of lost worker productivity So medical related costs in a pandemic could cost the U.S. economy between $100 billion and $215 billion dollars.

Conclusions

Economic impact of a pandemic on the

U.S. economy will be BIG –

somewhere between a mild and

severe recession

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Economic impacts of a severe pandemic with loss of economic output plus medical costs could approach $1 trillion. It would put the economy somewhere between a mild and a severe recession.

The following need to be thought out in advance of a pandemic for a business to do its best in the event of a pandemic.
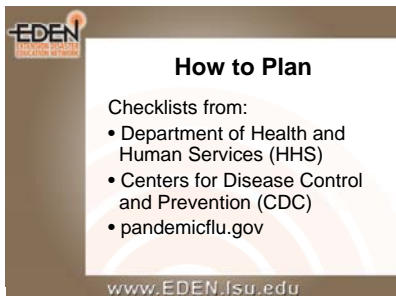- Prioritize essential functions
- Identify essential personnel
- Identify essential assets
- Identify alternate facilities
- Ensure communications/ connectivity
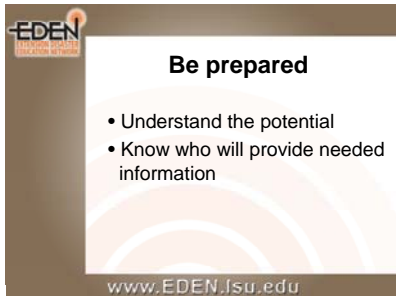
This course is a great beginning to understand the situation and know who will provide information.

The main site for information is
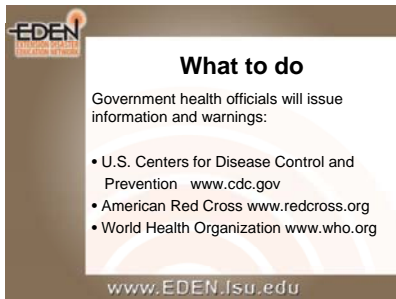http://www.pandemicflu.gov

To assist you in your efforts, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the following checklist for large businesses. It identifies important, specific activities large businesses can do now to prepare, many of which will also help you in the event of a pandemic.

HANDOUTS AT:
http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/businesschecklist.html

Section 4: What to do.

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What to do

Government health officials will issue information and warnings:

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention   www.cdc.gov
- American Red Cross www.redcross.org
- World Health Organization www.who.org

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If a pandemic flu strikes, government health officials will issue information and warnings and work with the media to disseminate advice on how to avoid becoming ill.
Your company's managers, human resources department, and employees should pay close attention to the guidance provided by local and state health departments and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) Other organizations that provide assistance in public health emergencies include the American Red Cross (www.redcross.org), and the World Health Organization (www.who.org).

In a worst-case scenario, "business as usual" may cease. Government health officials may have to implement dramatic measures, including shutting down certain businesses that involve high levels of interaction with the public, such as restaurants and theatres. Health officials may also have to restrict travel, cancel public events such as concerts or sports, and close schools.

What to do

Priority One:
Identify a pandemic coordinator and team

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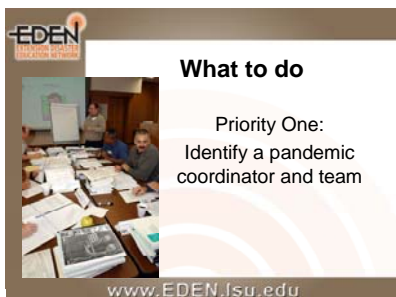
Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning. The planning process should include input from labor representatives.

Empower the team with:

- Knowledge of the issues
- Decision making abilities
- Access to key people
- Government agency access
- Employee communication skills

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Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.

This team should be provided the tools to develop and plan for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your products and/or services during a pandemic (e.g. effect of restriction on mass gatherings, need for hygiene supplies).

Identify essential functions and other critical inputs (e.g. raw materials, suppliers, sub-contractor services/ products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations by location and function during a pandemic.

Train and prepare ancillary workforce (e.g. contractors, employees in other job titles/descriptions, retirees).

It may impossible to estimate the potential economic impact on your company, but consider what the impact of a pandemic might have company business financials using multiple possible scenarios that affect different product lines and/or production sites. While you will not be able to anticipate all impacts, knowledge of potential problems and pre-planning will help you be a step-ahead during an event.

Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.

What to do

Exercise your plan.

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Implement an exercise/drill to test your plan, and revise periodically.

Plan for employee & community

Forecast and allow for employee absences

• Personal or family illness
• Community containment
• Business or school closures

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Forecast and allow for employee absences during a pandemic due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures.

Plan for employee & community

Implement guidelines on face-to-face contact among employees and between employees and customers.

Get CDC recommendations

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Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees and between employees and customers (refer to CDC recommendations that will be updated on www.pandemicflu.gov).

Plan for employee & community

• Encourage vaccinations
• Improve healthcare
• Provide mental health services
• Plan for special needs

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Encourage and track annual influenza vaccination for employees.
Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic, and improve services as needed.
Evaluate employee access to and availability of mental health and social services during a pandemic, including corporate, community, and faith-based resources, and improve services as needed.
Identify employees and key customers with special needs, and incorporate the requirements of such persons into your preparedness plan.

Plan for employee & community

Allow for
• Volunteers responding to pandemic
• Childcare needs forced by school closings

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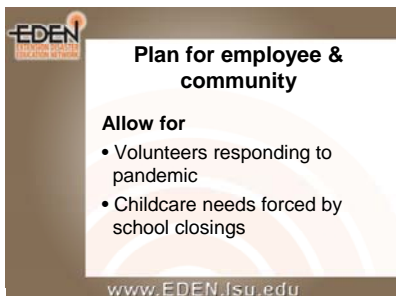
Your employees may put more priority on helping others than work. This is not business as usual. Plan to see how both needs can be met.

Many employees will be forced to deal with childcare closings. They won't have a choice; see if you can provide alternatives.

What to do
- Identify key vendors, suppliers and customers
- Identify/develop key contacts and chains of communication
- Anticipate supply/distribution chain interruptions

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Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.

What to do
- Anticipate travel restrictions
- Evaluate policies for employee absences
- Leave due to isolation or quarantine

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Understand potential quarantines and what you can do to comply and stay in business.
Think about telecommunication options.
Consider Family Medical Leave Act and company policies on medial leave.

What to do
Take steps for proper treatment
- Collaborate with health department
- Evaluate providing on-site clinic
- Provide transport to medical facilities

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Take steps for proper treatment
- Collaborate with health department and care providers to determine how treatment/vaccine should be offered
- Evaluate possibility of providing on-site clinic
- Determine other methods of access, including providing transportation to medical facility

What to do
Educate, Inform, and Involve
- Anticipate questions
- Allow for employee input
- Find ways to make a difference
- Practice appropriate, healthy behavior

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Educate, Inform, and Involve Workforce
- Provide ways for workforce to ask questions and provide input
- Communicate with, not to employees
- Find ways for some to make a difference at work and in their community
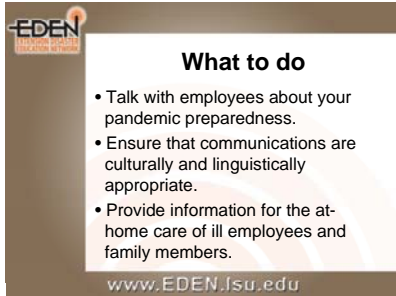- Help all practice appropriate, healthy behavior

What to do
- Develop programs and materials covering pandemic fundamentals
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation

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Develop and disseminate programs and materials covering pandemic fundamentals (e.g. signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g. hand hygiene, coughing/sneezing etiquette, contingency plans).
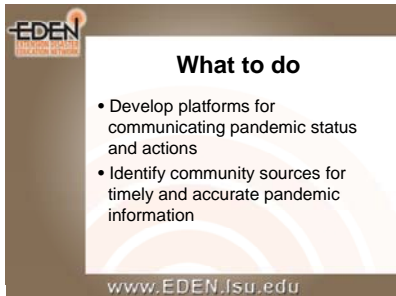Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly.

What to do

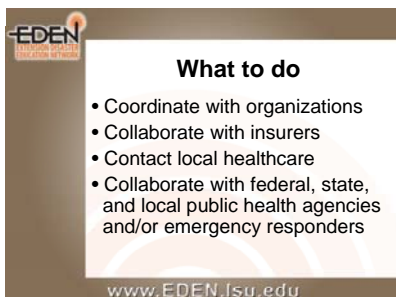- Talk with employees about your pandemic preparedness.
- Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Provide information for the at-home care of ill employees and family members.

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If you talk with, rather than talk to employees, you can ensure greater buy-in in your plans.

Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Provide information for the at-home care of ill employees and family members.

What to do

- Develop platforms for communicating pandemic status and actions
- Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information

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Develop platforms (e.g. hotlines, dedicated websites) for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way, including redundancies in the emergency contact system.

Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information. Also, know your community leaders and what they can and cannot provide

What to do

- Coordinate with organizations
- Collaborate with insurers
- Contact local healthcare
- Collaborate with federal, state, and local public health agencies and/or emergency responders

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Coordinate with external organizations in your community Collaborate with insurers, health plans, and major local healthcare facilities to share your pandemic plans and understand their capabilities and plans.

Collaborate with federal, state, and local public health agencies and/or emergency responders to participate in their planning processes, share your pandemic plans, and understand their capabilities and plans.

Communicate with local and/or state public health agencies and/or emergency responders about the assets and/or services your business could contribute to the community.

What to do

Share best practices with other businesses in your communities, chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

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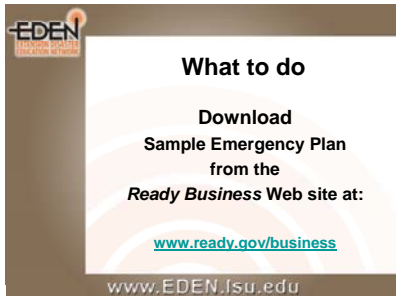
Section 5: Where to get information.

Section 5: Where to get information.
In addition to the pandemicflu.gov Web site, with useful checklists for businesses, Ready Business is a useful Web site developed by the Department of Homeland Security.
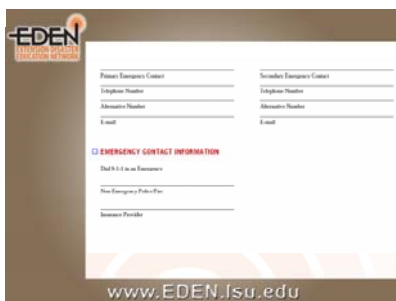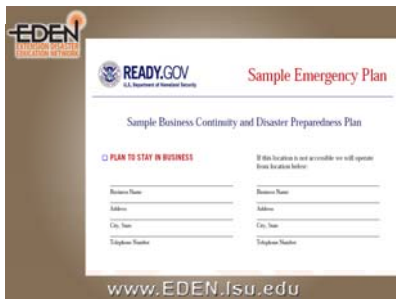
You can download a basic business preparedness plan and have your company team adapt it for pandemic preparedness.

Download the plan at: **www.ready.gov/business**

Essential information on a plan include:

Basic contact information including who prepared the plan.

Identifying other disasters that could impact your business, other then pandemics, is also helpful.

Developing emergency planning teams before a pandemic occurs is important.

Plan to coordinate with other businesses.

Identifying critical operations.

Supplier and alternative supplier information.

Emergency employee contact information and how you will communicate.

Also include plans to exercise and review the plan.