



## Legislation Text

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Chief Administrative Office and Health Services Departments providing the Board of Supervisors with a status update on the 2009 seasonal flu, H1N1 and the County of El Dorado's Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP).

The County of El Dorado provides vital services to the community. As a result, reliability is the fundamental mission of every department. Should a crisis disrupt essential departmental operations, the County would not be able to fulfill its fundamental mission in the absence of continuity of operations planning. The County has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that is used to prepare for, respond to, and recover from major disasters such as fire, flood, and earthquakes.

This Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a supplemental tool designed to help the County effectively perform day-to-day core services and functions when there is significant crisis over a longer period of time. Continuity of Operations for a pandemic influenza is different from a natural disaster in that there is no physical damage, there is no definitive beginning or end, it is unpredictable, and more people will potentially be affected over a larger area. A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when an infectious agent emerges in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

The most probable pandemic that could threaten El Dorado County is a new influenza like the H1N1, which emerges in the human population. Widespread illness throughout the County poses not only severe health risks; it is a major threat to the human infrastructure staffing critical facilities and can have severe economic and social consequences. The timeframe for a pandemic outbreak could range from several months to a year. The capability to transfer authority and responsibility for essential functions from a department's primary operating staff to other employees and to sustain that operational capability for an extended period is particularly critical in the event of a pandemic.

Essential functions are defined as those functions, stated or implied, that County departments are required to perform by statute, executive order, or County policy and are necessary to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain the safety and well-being of the general populace, and sustain the industrial/economic base in an emergency.

The focus of our planning primarily has been centered on the following areas;

- Assessment of essential functions and services,
- Transfer of Authority,
- Based on a projected 30% reduction in staffing levels

These are the critical components to a Continuity of Operations Planning for a Pandemic Influenza. The more prepared the County can be the better operations can be sustained in the event of a Pandemic Influenza.

Through our planning process concerns have been raised regarding what can departments do to decrease the spread of illness such as, can departments send an employee home if they are ill? If an

employee is sent home what is the status of the time off based on our rules and regulations? What is the possibility of telecommuting? County Counsel is researching some of these questions however; policy determinations may still need to be made once a legal opinion has been rendered. In the mean time departments should conform to the following basic recommendations:

### ***Sick employees should stay home***

- Advise workers to be alert to any signs of fever and any other signs of influenza-like illness before reporting to work each day, and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are ill. Employees who are ill should not travel while they are ill.
- El Dorado County Health Services Department recommends that employees with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Expect sick employees to be out for about 3 to 5 days in most cases, even if antiviral medications are used.
- Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with influenza can go to work as usual. However, these employees should monitor their health every day, and notify their supervisor and/or stay home if they become ill.

### ***Encourage Sick employees to go home***

- El Dorado County Health Services Department recommends that workers who appear to have an influenza-like illness upon arrival or become ill during the day be promptly separated from other workers and be advised to go **home** until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Those who become ill with symptoms of an influenza-like illness during the work day should be:
  - Separated from other workers and asked to go home promptly.
  - El Dorado County Health Services Department is **NOT** recommending the use of masks at this time.

### ***Cover coughs and sneezes***

- Influenza viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. Provide employee messages on the importance of covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or, in the absence of a tissue, one's sleeve. Encourage proper cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles are recommended for use by employees.

### ***Improve hand hygiene***

- Influenza may be spread via contaminated hands. Instruct employees to wash their hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after coughing or sneezing. Encourage proper hand hygiene.
- The use of soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers are recommended in the workplace. If feasible, place hand sanitizers in multiple locations or in conference rooms to

encourage hand hygiene.

***Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact***

- Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended.

***Encourage employees to get vaccinated***

- Encourage your employees to get vaccinated for 2009 seasonal influenza and H1N1
- We encourage all County Employees to get vaccinated please refer to the Public Health website for vaccination information.

In summary, departments need to be preparing for increased numbers of employee absences due to employee illness and/or their family members. A good Continuity of Operations plan (COOP) will facilitate the sustainability of essential functions and services to the community.

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