

City of Decatur
Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan

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Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan

The City of Decatur's Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan is intended to deal with the specific threat of pandemic conditions within the City of Decatur's jurisdiction. This plan will address the impact of a pandemic event the impact on the community, personnel and systems. The procedures set forth in this approach will also apply to other events — chemical, biological or radiological incidents and attacks, as well as man-made or natural disasters.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan will also be integrated into Decatur Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

ASSUMPTIONS

A pandemic event is unlike any crisis we have encountered. No one can predict when it might arrive, where it might strike, how long it might last, and how serious its impacts might be. Prudence requires that we assume and plan for a worst-case scenario. Accordingly, the Decatur Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- As many as 30 to 50 percent of the government's employees could become ill at the pandemic's peak; another 5 percent may refuse to report to work, either because they fear becoming ill or because they are caring for afflicted family members.
- The government will not be able to perform all functions and provide all services at full capacity throughout the pandemic.
- Any government office may be closed because of staffing shortages or because of a limited community quarantine.
- An indeterminate number of people in the community will be unable to reach government offices to conduct normal business activities.
- Confusion within the community and demand for information could overwhelm our existing communications systems.

- Some vendors will be unable to provide services or deliver supplies.
- Travel will be restricted for some periods of time within and outside the community.
- Pandemic-related financial stress, possibly civil unrest, and enhanced opportunities will increase the risk of security threats.
- The pandemic will cause a serious economic downturn, the scope and duration of which are impossible to predict.

Introduction of the Response Plan

The City Of Decatur recognizes the need for and fully supports the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan. The goal of the plan is to protect employees, the community, facilities, systems, property and operations during any pandemic and maintain normal operations, to the extent possible, consistent with those goals. In the event that normal operations cannot be maintained, the goals will be to maximize the continuity of the government's essential services to the community. Finally, the plan will provide for a return to full operations and services as quickly as possible.

Scope of the Response Plan

This plan is intended to anticipate the potential issues that impact the government, its employees, the community and the operations that may be affected by a pandemic. The nature of a flu pandemic is that it will primarily impact the employees, the community, and their security. Unlike most other potential disasters, such as floods, severe storms and the like, the primary threat is not physical destruction of records or facilities caused by the disaster event. This plan, therefore, will focus only on the threats that are reasonably related to pandemic flu. Other threats should be addressed by the Decatur Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

Mission of the Response Plan

We have defined the primary missions of the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan as follows:

- Identify the hazards that will be produced by an outbreak of flu pandemic
- Plan for and reduce the impact of the outbreak
- Maintain operations during an outbreak, after the event and after subsequent mini-outbreaks have subsided
- Advise senior officials, department heads, employees, the community, consultants, vendors, and sub-contractors on the things they can do to mitigate the impact of an outbreak on the community and themselves and to become more pandemic-resistant

The plan will address and answer the following key questions:

- What will we do if any of our facilities are closed for a short term, long term or permanently?
- What processes or operational capacities must be maintained as critical functions that must be maintained for survival of our government and the community?
- What alternatives are available or in place to assist in maintaining our supply chain if our key vendor partners experience disabling losses to their workforce and cannot maintain our needs?
- What alternative processes are in place to assist our community base in the event of an outbreak, isolation, quarantine or other factors that affect their ability to undertake and maintain even the most basic day-to-day functions?
- What must be in place to assure the continuity and integrity of government services such as police, fire, public health, and emergency response?
- What security enhancements must be in place and maintained?
- What impact will weather and utility issues have on ongoing operations?

- How long can we survive in the event of partial or total isolation and/or quarantine?

Decatur Emergency Management Committee

Decatur City Manager Peggy Merriss has appointed the Decatur Emergency Management Committee pursuant to the Decatur Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The committee is responsible for leading the City through a pandemic flu response. The committee will direct the government's planning, preparedness, training, response and recovery to a flu pandemic.

Trigger Events

The following events should be considered trigger events for implementation of all or portions of this plan.

- Determination by the State Public Health Department that an pandemic flu outbreak is imminent or has begun
- Directive of the local board of health to implement a response protocol
- Irrefutable evidence that an outbreak has occurred within our community and is not a generic seasonal flu outbreak, in which event the Decatur Emergency Management Committee will notify all pre-determined state and local public health departments and agencies
- Excessive employee absenteeism, whether pandemic-induced or not, that results in the government being in jeopardy of experiencing pandemic related business crises
- Confirmation of employee exposure to pandemic flu contagions

Plan Activation

The City Manger will declare that a pandemic flu crisis has occurred and order the implementation of those portions of this plan as may be necessary.

Personnel and Community Safety

Upon activation of this plan, the first and most important goal is to protect the health and safety of employees and people in the community. If the Decatur Emergency Management Committee determines that “normal” operations or altered operations can be maintained at any office, maximum efforts should be made to eliminate or minimize any potential for infection or other danger to employees or people in the community. The Decatur Emergency Management Committee, in conjunction with the local Board of Health, makes this determination and any alterations to the assigned protocols will be approved only by the Committee as directed or informed by the local Board of Health.

Pandemic Flu Crisis Assessment

Upon the declaration of a flu pandemic crisis, the Decatur Emergency Management Committee:

- Notifies all Decatur Emergency Management Committee members and the City Manager informs the Mayor and Commissioners
- Immediately informs all members of City Management Team.
- Makes notification via Emergency Notification System in case all personnel are not present in the government offices or if the declaration does not occur during normal business hours.
- Includes a date, place and time of the first meeting of the City Management Team, which should be within hours of the completion of the notification process. If the members are unable to physically meet due to governmental limitations on travel or quarantine, then they will meet by conference call.

At the first meeting the Decatur Emergency Management Committee will:

- Make an initial risk determination to define the extent of the crisis and what portions of the program need to be implemented based on that analysis.
- Contact other government officials, community leaders, regional partners, or other resources as necessary to accomplish the objectives of this plan.

- Meet on a scheduled or as-needed basis on at least a daily basis, either in person or by telephone, to continually assess the severity of the crisis, the efficacy of City of Decatur’s response, DeKalb County, and State governmental responses, and whether any changes need to be made to implement additional elements of the plan.

Components of the Plan

Our plan will cover the following areas:

- Continuity of essential functions
- Human resources considerations
- Security measures
- Financial impact
- Crisis communications

Continuity of Essential Functions

We have every hope that City of Decatur would be able to operate at full capacity throughout a flu pandemic. However, we also recognize that this may not be possible, because of staff illnesses, the directives of state or local government (which may include travel restrictions and a full or partial quarantine), public health agency-mandated isolation policies, the disruption of power, communications and other essential services, and other pandemic-related problems. Accordingly, the Decatur Emergency Management Committee conducted extensive interviews with managers and staff members throughout City of Decatur to identify the following core functions that, in the committee’s view, must be sustained to maximize City of Decatur’s ability to recover from the pandemic and resume normal operations after it has ended:

- Public health services
- Healthcare services
- Emergency management

- Law enforcement
- Communications
- Human resources

PERSONNEL POLICIES

City of Decatur’s ability to maintain essential functions will depend on the health, training, performance, and dedication of its employees. To protect the health of our employees, Decatur Emergency Management Committee will work with the Personnel Office and the Personnel Director, who also serves as the Infectious Control Officer for the city; to implement the following policies:

- *Educate employees about flu* by providing printed materials and holding in-house seminars.
- *Encourage employees to practice good hygiene* (e.g., frequent hand-washing) and give them the tools they need to do so. City of Decatur will provide all employees with anti-bacterial hand-washing solutions and wipes to keep desks, telephones, computers, and other equipment and furnishings germ-free. Additionally, City of Decatur will provide all employees who interact regularly with customers with:
 - Latex or nitrile gloves
 - Surgical masks
 - Protective eyewear
 - Hand sanitizer

The heads of each department will be responsible for ordering and maintaining sufficient quantities of these supplies for the employees they supervise:

- The purchasing manager will be responsible for stockpiling sufficient quantities of these supplies to last for at least six months — City of Decatur’s “worst case” projection of the pandemic’s likely duration.
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee and the Personnel Office will be jointly responsible for training employees in the proper use and disposal of protective gear.

- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee and Personnel Office will also develop policies governing the use of this equipment. These policies will include rules specifying that the gear will not be used unless authorized by a senior official from the government.
- *Require employees to stay home when they are ill.* The Personnel Office will develop protocols for monitoring and verifying illnesses to avoid the abuse of this temporary policy.

The Decatur Emergency Management Committee and the Personnel Office will also identify employees who are able to perform their jobs, or other functions, from their homes, and develop policies that will make it possible for them to do so. These policies will specify the criteria for determining the employees who will be assigned to work at home (or the functions that can be performed in homes). The work-at-home option will be implemented when the Decatur Emergency Management Committee, with the approval of City of Decatur’s City Manager (or, in her absence, see Succession Plan) announces that the government’s Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan is in effect.

The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will work with department managers to identify and provide the equipment (telecommunications systems, hardware, and software) that employees working from home will require. The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will also identify and provide any additional security measures required to protect the employees working at home and the data and computer systems they are using.

- *Establish “social distancing” protocols:*
- Separate employee desks and work stations.
 - Advise employees to avoid hand-shaking, sharing of utensils and other interactions through which flu germs can be spread.
 - Provide protective plastic “cough shields” to separate employees from the public to mitigate the transmission of bacteria.
 - Supervisors will discourage employees from eating meals at restaurants, strongly urging them to bring meals from home instead.
- *Establish rigorous standards for cleaning and maintenance of City of Decatur’s facilities.*
- Implement training programs for in-house cleaning staff.

- Require vendors providing cleaning services to demonstrate adequate training for their employees, to ensure that they are well-briefed in pandemic protocols and understand the need to treat bathrooms, lunchrooms, elevators, and other common areas with antibacterial solutions.
- *Keep public spaces free of clutter to prevent them from becoming unknowingly contaminated.*
- *Encourage all employees to obtain flu shots.*

It is not clear that a vaccine for a non-seasonal flu will be developed before a pandemic strikes, but employees should take advantage of whatever immunizations are available at the time.

- *Limit travel to essential business that cannot be conducted in any other way.*

Develop procedures for monitoring the pandemic in areas to which employees may be traveling and procedures for monitoring the health of employees who travel to other areas.

- *Limit the meetings employees must attend.*

City of Decatur will expand its audio-conferencing and teleconferencing capacity to ensure that meetings may be conducted through those mechanisms.

- *Implement “flex-time” scheduling wherever possible, so employees can avoid public transportation during peak commuting times.*
- *Install Hepa Filters at all HVA ventilation grilles.*

- *If there is reason to suspect that employees have had direct contact with someone infected with the virus, direct the employees to:*

- Change shirts, scarves, jewelry, hair bands and any other clothing or accessory articles in the general area of the suspected contact contamination.
- Wash hands immediately with hand sanitizer or antibacterial soap before touching face, eyes, nose, mouth or other mucous membrane surfaces.
- Using latex gloves, put exposed clothing and accessories in a plastic bag, seal it and then dispose of the latex gloves in a separate plastic bag using an “inside-out”

removal process for the gloves. Then seal this bag and dispose or sanitize both bags properly.

- If possible, take a thorough shower.
- Refrain from touching food until all universal sanitization protocols have been followed.

Mental Health Concerns

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan focuses on the physical health of employees, but a pandemic will affect their emotional health as well. Supervisors will be instructed to monitor employees for signs of stress and depression. Additionally, City of Decatur will make counseling services available through EAP provider.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND CROSS-TRAINING

We have identified six essential functions to be maintained at as close to full capacity as possible throughout the pandemic. To maintain minimum staffing levels:

- The heads of all critical departments, working with the Personnel Office, will ensure that a sufficient number of employees in each department can cover every position in that department.
- All employees in each critical department will receive sufficient training to perform some essential functions of every position in the department.
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee, working with the Personnel Office, will identify employees in non-critical departments capable of being cross-trained to perform essential functions in all critical departments. The Personnel Office will arrange for and implement the necessary training sessions to achieve that goal.
- The managers of each critical department will identify essential functions that can be outsourced and make arrangements for those services.
- The Personnel Office will identify recent City of Decatur retirees trained to perform essential functions in critical departments, contact those employees, determine their

willingness to provide back-up support, and, if necessary, arrange refresher training sessions for the employees to familiarize them with current systems and procedures.

- As part of a mutual assistance arrangement with other community governments, City of Decatur will provide back-up support, as needed, for other communities and will receive back-up assistance from them, including the sharing of staff members with the ability to perform essential functions in critical departments.
- The Personnel Office will track the spread of the avian flu illness within City of Decatur, monitor absences and the status of ill employees, and will communicate that information daily to the Decatur Emergency Management Committee, so the committee can make decisions about the necessary deployment and re-deployment of staff members.

VENDOR SERVICES

- The heads of all departments will identify vendors/suppliers providing services and/or supplies essential to their operations.
- The purchasing manager will work with department heads to identify and establish relationships with back-up vendors and suppliers.
- The purchasing manager will also obtain the pandemic response plans from all primary vendors and suppliers.
- The purchasing manager will establish protocols to reduce the risk that vendors with access to City of Decatur may spread the flu virus to employees. These protocols will include rules requiring vendors to wear protective gear when entering the City of Decatur's facilities during periods that require City of Decatur employees in contact with the public to wear protective gear.

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will work with all departments to develop a list of essential supplies sufficient for all City of Decatur's departments to operate for three months. This list of essential supplies will include, in addition to personal protective equipment and basic office supplies, back-up equipment (laptops, monitors, printers, and fax machines). The

designated purchasing officer consults with department heads to identify back-up equipment needs for the institution as a whole, and consults with Assistant City Manager/ Administrative Services to determine a reasonable budget for these purchases.

HEALTHCARE SERVICE AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Healthcare services are essential to the social and financial welfare of the community, and therefore, a priority. All persons living or working in the community expect to have access to Emergency Medical Services and healthcare providers who can diagnose, treat, and monitor influenza, particularly non-seasonal types of flu. To achieve that goal in a pandemic setting, City of Decatur will take the following steps:

- Consult government counsel to become familiar with the potential legal issues that can affect staffing and patient care.
- Develop medical supply contingency plans to ensure as constant a supply of medical items as possible.
- Ensure that the special needs of vulnerable and hard-to-reach patients often under the care of long-term care facilities, home care, and emergency care, are addressed.
- Maintain a program of medical and non-medical volunteers, to meet staffing needs during a pandemic.
- Inform citizens in advance about what containment procedures, such as isolation or quarantine, may be used in the community.
- Identify the legal authorities for implementing and enforcing containment measures, such as school closings, canceling public transportation, and other movement restrictions.
- Emergency Medical Response and Transport is the primary responsibility of DeKalb County Fire Rescue. The Decatur Fire Chief will obtain and coordinate with the Dekalb County Fire Rescue Medical Response Plan. The medical response plans of both departments will be reviewed by government counsel to become familiar with the potential legal issues that can affect staffing and patient care.

- Implement mutual assistance pacts with other communities whereby City of Decatur serves the public its partner communities are unable to accommodate and partner communities provide services City of Decatur is unable to provide to people in its community.

SECURITY

Social disruption and civil unrest may be among the byproducts of an avian flu pandemic. To mitigate those risks for City of Decatur:

- The Police Department will ensure special security training for law enforcement forces in how to respond to incidents, particularly during a pandemic.
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee assesses the security risks throughout the community, based on their location and past vulnerability history. Decatur Emergency Management Committee will arrange for enhanced security measures as needed. These enhances measures will include, but not be limited to:
 - Requesting additional security personnel from the state
 - Arranging for an increase in vendor-provided security service
 - Adding electronic security equipment
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will develop protocols for securing City buildings or other facilities that are closed temporarily.
- The Technology Committee will develop protocols for ensuring the security of data, documents, and equipment that are transported to other sites or to the homes of employees who are working remotely.
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will communicate with the fire and police departments and legal counsel to outline City of Decatur's security procedures and coordinate emergency response protocols.
- The Decatur Emergency Management Committee will ensure that at least all employees in each City of Decatur facility are trained in emergency first aid and CPR.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Recognizing that Information Services is a critical function on which other critical functions rely, Decatur Emergency Management Committee has instructed the Technology Committee to ensure the outside vendor for technology has taken appropriate steps to ensure its ability to provide essential services during an emergency.

Additionally, the Technology Committee will plan for the availability of City of Decatur's primary server and determined that the outside vendor has taken appropriate steps to ensure its ability to provide essential services to City of Decatur. Those steps include back-up arrangements with two servers in different regions of the country, far removed from this community, who could provide back office IT functions for City of Decatur if the primary server is unable to do so. Additionally, as part of its mutual assistance agreement with other community governments, City of Decatur will provide back-up Information Services support to them and receive Information Services support from them.

Computer and Data Security

To strengthen our computer and data security measures and address the vulnerabilities a pandemic will create, City of Decatur has taken the following steps:

- Identified a government office to serve as a remote operations center for the Information Services staff or vendors, should it become necessary to install them in a safe and isolated location.
- Instructed the Technology Committee to obtain back-up for all its essential equipment.
- Instructed the Technology Committee to review all existing security programs to ensure their effectiveness and to enhance those programs, as needed, to cope with the heightened security risks anticipated in an avian flu pandemic.
- Instructed all department managers to instruct employees to back up all data and operating programs on their PCs daily.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

It is impossible to predict the likely economic effects of a pandemic, but this plan will assume that City of Decatur can reasonably expect that the impacts of a full-blown pandemic will be massive and widespread, affecting the entire community. This section of the plan is adapted from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources*. It provides three separate scenarios using varied assumptions about how long the pandemic will last and how severe its repercussions will be. City of Decatur will use these scenarios as models for their response to the preservation of the community's financial welfare.

Continuity of Essential Operations

Scenario One assumes a pandemic disaster that affects businesses for an extended period. It also is assumed that normal business operations will be significantly degraded over an extended period of time and there will be substantial economic loss. But if essential and critical functions can be sustained, then disruptions can be contained and business failure can possibly be avoided.

Scenario Two assumes a pandemic disaster that is catastrophic in its effect, with businesses directly or indirectly damaged for an extended period. It also is assumed that business operations will be almost totally lost, with significant economic impact. All that can be expected is to preserve and recover the business over time. Business failures will likely cause a cascading effect.

Scenario Three assumes a pandemic disaster that is catastrophic in its effect, with businesses directly or indirectly damaged for an extended period. It also is assumed that without government or private sector support, a business will fail, increasing the potential for cascading effects for other businesses and the community. Focusing on what remains of a business' capability and capacity would be necessary to preserve, at a minimum, those goods and services the business directly or indirectly provides locally, regionally, and nationally.

Assuming anyone of these scenarios, City of Decatur has taken the following steps:

- Identified the level of worker absenteeism its local government can sustain.
- Prepared to monitor effect of transportation restrictions and /or border restrictions on the movement of essential supplies to the business community, noting the capacity of the business community to wait out the pandemic with limits on essential supplies.

- Conduct frequent assessment of financial and social impact this pandemic has on healthcare facilities, emergency services, and social services.
- Made backup provisions with other regions in the event of a shortage of fuel, certain food types, electrical supply, and potable water.
- Arranged with state and regional partners to augment public safety and security forces in the event it is needed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internal and external communications are essential components of any crisis management plan. Accordingly:

- City of Decatur will create a Crisis Communications Committee, responsible for developing and executing plans for communicating with employees, the community, and the media during the pandemic.
- The members of this committee will include, but not limited to:
 - The Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development, who will also serve as the overall Communications Coordinator
 - Planning Director
 - Personnel Director
 - Representative of Fire and Police
 - Representative of the City Manager
 - Legal Counsel
- The Communications Coordinator will designate members of the committee with primary responsibility for communications with media, employees, and the community.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will develop and secure prior approval of advance letters, press releases, and other communications for all audiences that will be released when the pandemic response plan is implemented.

- The Communications Coordinator, who will also serve as the media coordinator, will select City of Decatur senior government officials to serve as the government’s official media spokespersons during the pandemic.
- The Communications Coordinator will ensure that the media spokespersons have the training required to fulfill their responsibilities.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will develop protocols for developing and disseminating communications material to all audiences during the pandemic.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will disseminate copies of the Flu Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan to all employees.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will develop and disseminate emergency contact numbers, and emergency communication protocols, outlining back-up communication procedures to all employees and the community.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will develop “dark sites” for City of Decatur’s web site, containing emergency pandemic information for employees, the community, and the media, to be activated when the pandemic response plan is implemented. Designated committee members will update the information on those sites throughout the pandemic.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will create mechanisms for responding quickly and accurately to questions from the community about City of Decatur’s pandemic policies. These mechanisms shall include a telephone “hot line” and e-mail response.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will establish procedures for jointly developing and issuing public statements with strategic partners.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will provide accurate and current information about City of Decatur’s policies and procedures, about the implementation of its pandemic response plan, about the pandemic and pandemic preparedness to City of Decatur’s employees and the community, and to the media.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will develop scripts summarizing relevant information about health care services and pandemic policies and procedures for use by call centers and employees who have direct contact with the public.

- The Crisis Communications Committee will communicate regularly with employees, the community, and the media throughout the pandemic to keep them updated on the pandemic's impact, and to announce and explain any changes in policies and procedures.
- The Crisis Communications Committee will monitor media reports — print, broadcast, and Internet — to spot and respond as needed to items that might disturb or confuse persons in the community or employees, or convey inaccurate information about City of Decatur.
- The communications team will monitor the effectiveness of the crisis communications plan throughout the pandemic and make adjustments as needed.

City of Decatur Succession Plan

City Management

City Manager

Deputy City Manager

Assistant City Manager/ Administrative Services

Assistant City Manager/ Community & Economic Development

Assistant City Manager/ Public Works

Planning Director

Emergency Management

Assistant City Manager/ Emergency Services

Assistant City Manager/ Public Works

Police Chief

Fire Chief

Assistant Police Chief

Assistant Fire Chief

Communications Management

Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development

Assistant City Manager/ Community & Economic Development

Planning Director

Development Services Coordinator

Special Events Coordinator

Volunteer Decatur Coordinator