

Continuity of Operations During a Flu Pandemic

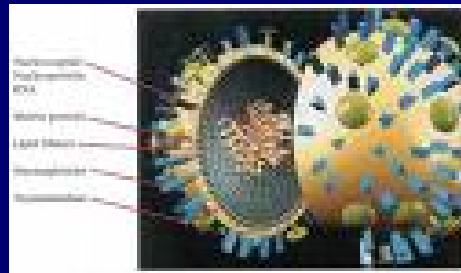
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NC Center for Public Health Preparedness

Webinar Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness



Continuity of Operations During a Flu Pandemic



Business Continuity and Public Health Concerns

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Learning Objectives

- Describe unique characteristics of continuity planning for a pandemic compared to other types of disasters
- Identify key components of business continuity plans
- List steps health departments can take now to prepare for pandemic influenza

Your Organization is a Business

- Providing goods or services
- Customers
- Human Resources
- Revenue streams
- Physical Plant
- IT Infrastructure



What is Business Continuity?

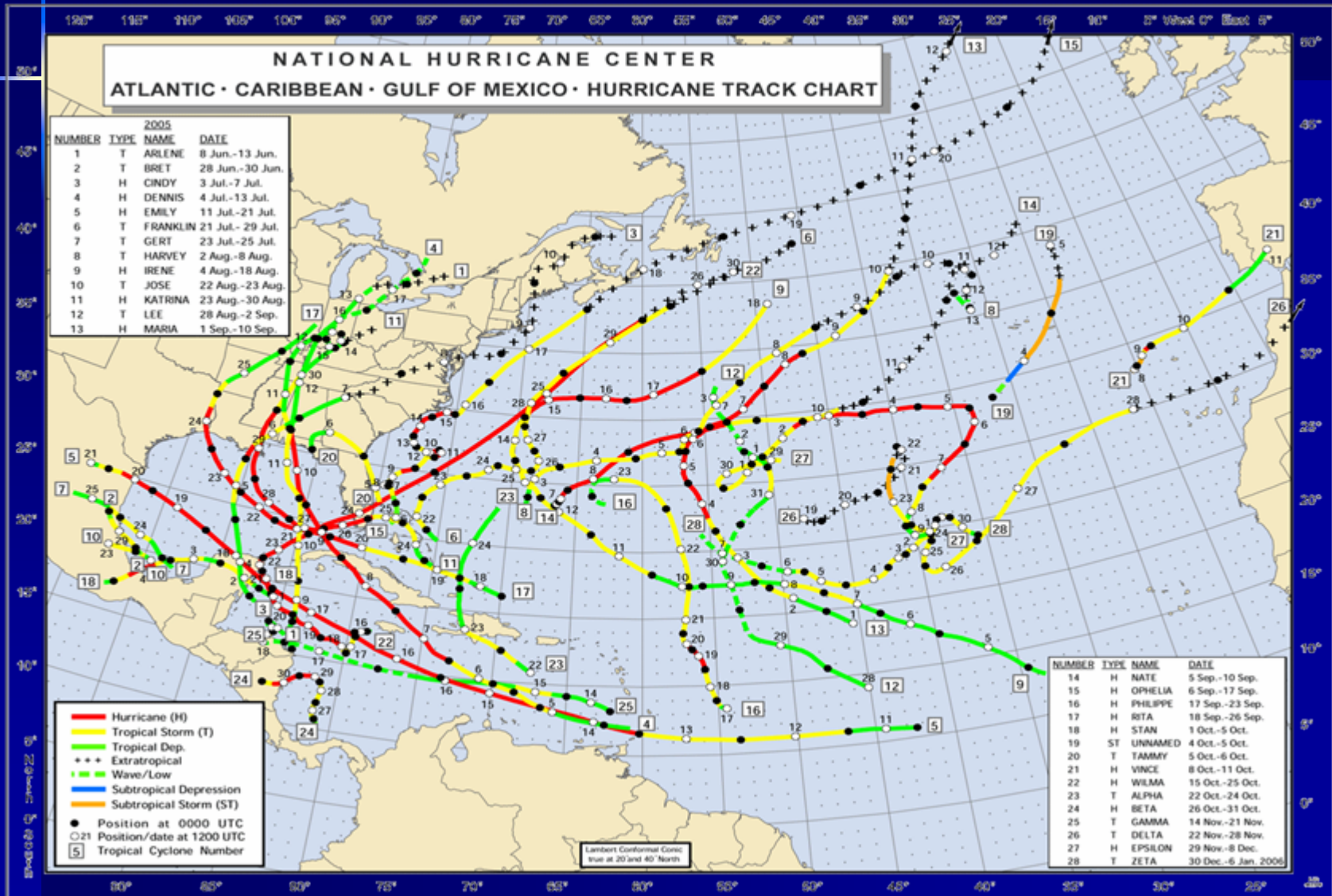
Business continuity refers to all the policies, plans, arrangements and procedures any organization develops to enable an organization to respond to disruptive events, and resume or continue performing critical functions after an interruption.

Source: Disaster Recovery Journal Glossary

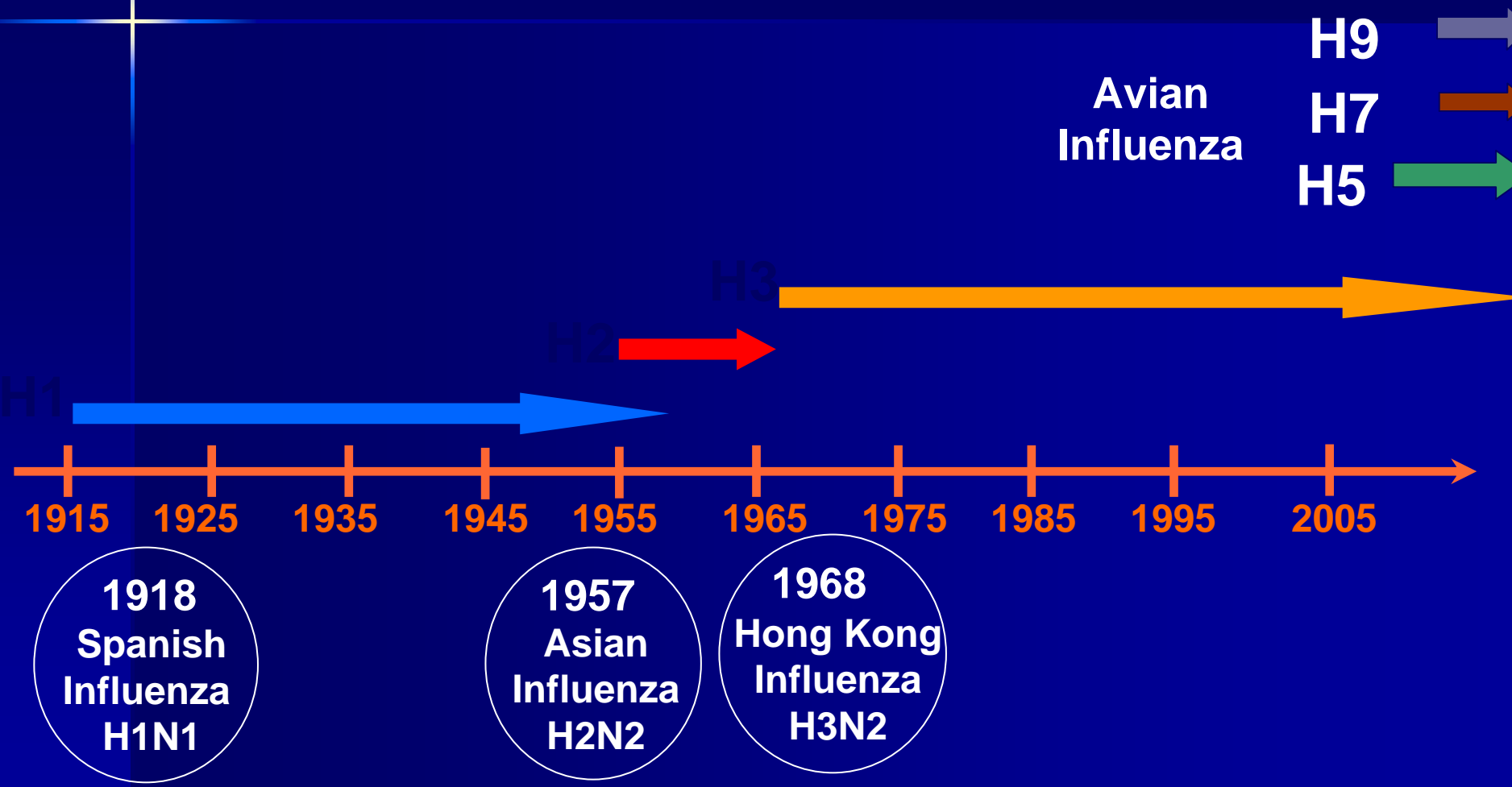
Business Continuity During a Pandemic

- Most organizations have some experience dealing with natural disasters
 - Hurricanes
 - Tornadoes
 - Winter Storms
 - Flooding
- Pandemic influenza is unique

Hurricanes - 2005



Timeline of Emergence of Influenza Viruses in Humans



Traditional Disasters and Pandemics - Differences

	Natural Disaster	Pandemic Influenza
Timeframe	Relatively short (< 6 weeks)	Up to 18 months, with repeated waves
Effects	Physical infrastructure	Human resources
Area	Defined geographical area	All areas at once

Traditional Disasters and Pandemics - Similarities

- Advance planning is critical
- Social disruption is predictable
- Neither hurricanes nor pandemics can be prevented, but they can be prepared for
- Mental health concerns are significant

Key Public Health Concerns – Natural Disasters

- Physical Injuries
- Surveillance and response to infectious disease outbreaks
- Mental stress for both those impacted and responders



Key Public Health Concerns - Pandemics

- Surveillance and reporting
- Limiting spread of infection
- Triage of limited health resources
- Managing community mental health



Impact of Pandemic on Communities

- Economic disruption
- Morbidity
- Mortality
- Mental duress

Key Assumptions

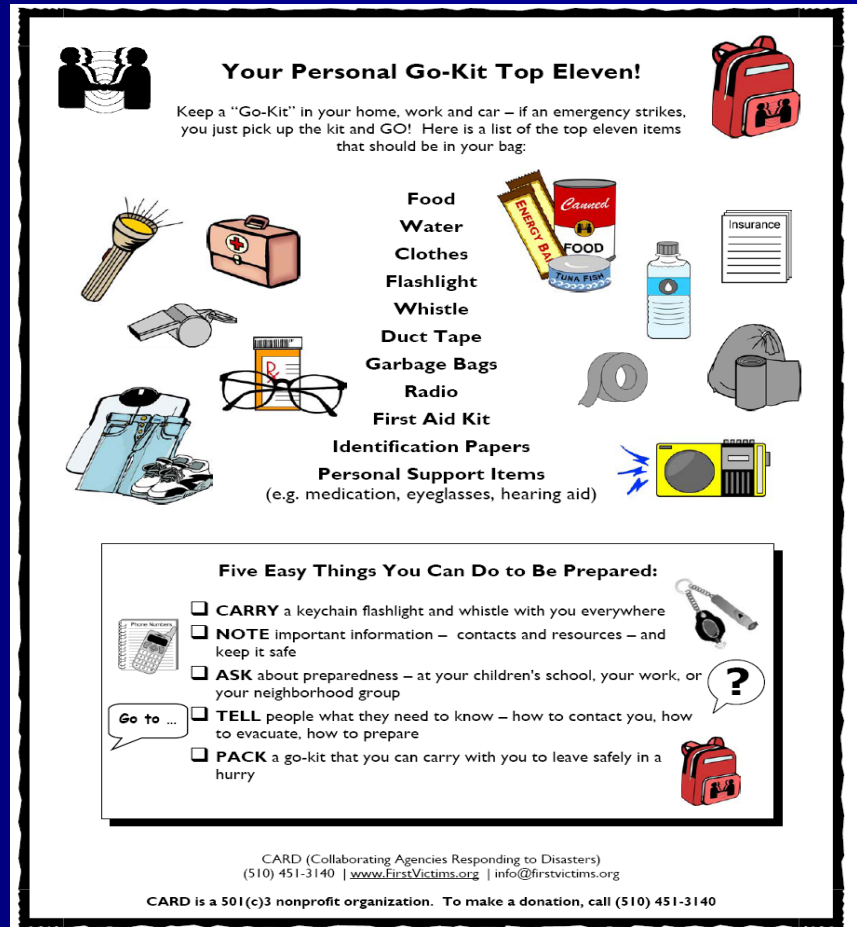
- Anticipate absenteeism of up to 30% of workforce at all levels of organization
- Expect multiple waves of infection, spaced 3-6 months apart
- Each wave of pandemic could last 6 weeks to 6 months

Staff Perceptions

- In April 2006, Johns Hopkins published data suggesting that almost 50% of local public health workers did not plan to come to work during a pandemic (www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/6/99)
- Staff roles may change during a pandemic; this must be planned for in advance

Begin with Personal Preparedness

- Develop Household Disaster Plan
 - Communication
 - Childcare
 - Pets
 - Special Needs
- Prepare Disaster Supply Kit



Your Personal Go-Kit Top Eleven!

Keep a "Go-Kit" in your home, work and car – if an emergency strikes, you just pick up the kit and GO! Here is a list of the top eleven items that should be in your bag:

- Food
- Water
- Clothes
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- Duct Tape
- Garbage Bags
- Radio
- First Aid Kit
- Identification Papers
- Personal Support Items (e.g. medication, eyeglasses, hearing aid)

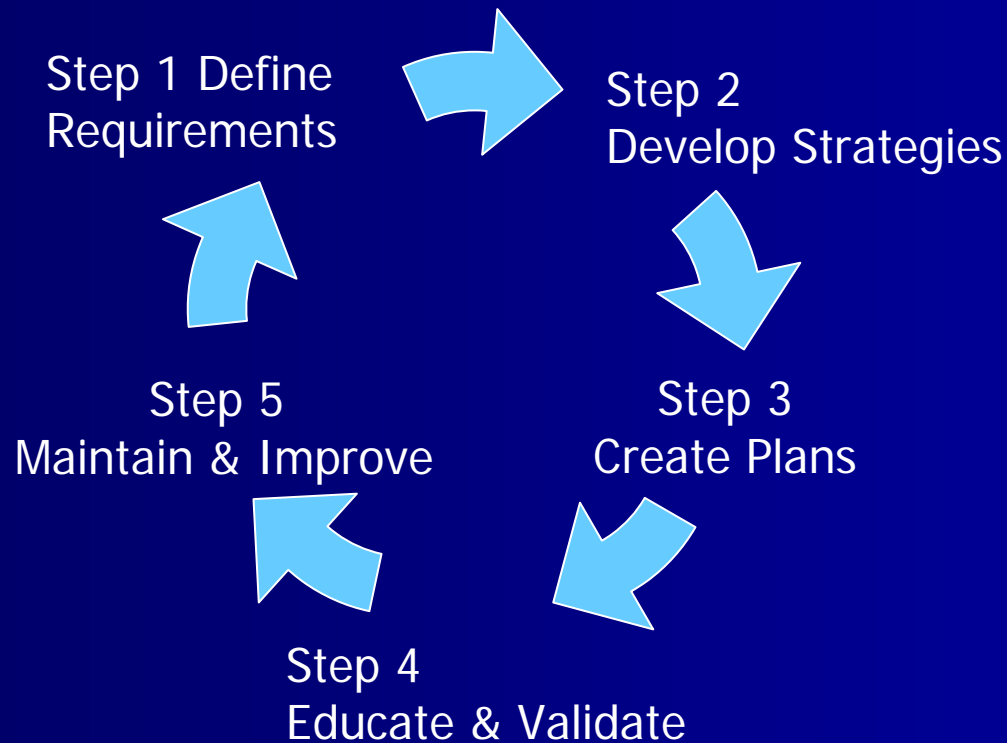
Five Easy Things You Can Do to Be Prepared:

- CARRY** a keychain flashlight and whistle with you everywhere
- NOTE** important information – contacts and resources – and keep it safe
- ASK** about preparedness – at your children's school, your work, or your neighborhood group
- TELL** people what they need to know – how to contact you, how to evacuate, how to prepare
- PACK** a go-kit that you can carry with you to leave safely in a hurry

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Business Continuity Planning Steps



Step 1 – Determine Requirements

- What are the critical functions that *must* be done for your organization to remain viable?
 - Differences: Public vs. Private Sector
- Not everything can be considered critical
- Which functions *must* be performed onsite, which can be done remotely?

Step 1: Determine Requirements

Criteria for Determining Essential Services (in the Public Sector)

Services that:

- Are under increased demand during a pandemic to fulfill basic necessities and social needs
- Directly support reduction in deaths and hospitalizations
- Function in healthcare sector or emergency services

Step 1: Determine Requirements

Examples of Critical Services

- Death care services
- EMS organizations
- Fire Services agencies
- Food suppliers
- Government agencies
- Law Enforcement agencies
- Hospitals and clinics
- Pharmacies
- Media organizations
- Public Health services
- Public transportation agencies
- Public Utilities

Step 2 – Develop Strategies

- Once critical functions are identified, determine resources necessary and strategies for assuring their availability to perform critical functions
- Resources and strategies to be considered include financial, information technology resources, and human resources

Step 2 – Develop Strategies

Possible Pandemic Business Continuity Strategies

- Change in work schedules (e.g., extend to 12-hour shifts)
- Telecommuting
- Video Conferencing
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Step 3 – Create Plans

- Write out policies, procedures, and other processes necessary to articulate the critical functions, document the needed resources, and describe strategy for continuity
- Refer to roles, responsibilities and functions, not specific persons in organization
- Create matrix to show which positions/departments need to “back up” others

Step 3: Create Plans Job Action Sheets

- Job Title
- Job Mission
- Supervisor Name
- Immediate Duties
- On-going Duties
- Extended Duties

Operation Section Chief

Your Report to: _____

Job Shift: _____

Mission: Direct the operations of the POD to accomplish the POD's mission, guided by the POD Manual, Field Operations Guide (FOG), DPH directives sent through the Incident Commander, and the Incident Action Plan (IAP) created by the POD Planning Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief will develop tactical objectives as needed to implement operations in accordance with the IAP and other guidance.

Immediate Duties

- Receive appointment from Incident Commander.
- Receive and wear badge/vest.
- Obtain briefing from Incident Commander and debriefing from previous shift Section Leader.
- Obtain and review packet containing Operations Section JAS.
- Appoint Unit Leaders in the Section in accordance with the POD ICS chart.
- Receive and review the day's IAP. Distribute copies to Unit Leaders.
- Recruit documentation assistant(s), and ensure documentation of actions and decisions.
- Brief Unit Leaders.
- Walk through POD, observe set-up of different stations, and staffing.

On-Going Duties

- Receive, review and implement Operation Plans or other directives distributed by the Incident Commander.
- Provide status reports to Situation-Status Unit Leader of the Planning Unit and IAP projection reports as requested.
- Schedule and hold regular tactical planning meetings, and obtain briefings and status reports from Unit Leaders as appropriate.
- Conduct walk through of POD assessing stations, monitoring traffic flow of operations and identify any bottlenecks.
- Observe all Section staff, volunteers, and patients for signs of stress and inappropriate behavior.
- Report concerns to Employee/Volunteer Support Unit. Provide for staff rest periods and relief.
- Follow-up with Unit Leader to address bottlenecks, or underutilization of team and implement strategic changes to operations.

Extended Duties

- Monitor coordination interventions of Security Unit when inappropriate behavior is observed from staff or patients to ensure safety of POD.
- Monitor interventions of Behavioral Health staff when patients demonstrate escalating signs of stress or disruptive behavior.
- Receive debriefing from Unit Leaders near end of shift.
- Prepare and deliver briefing to next shift relief.
- Walk through POD and check on stations.

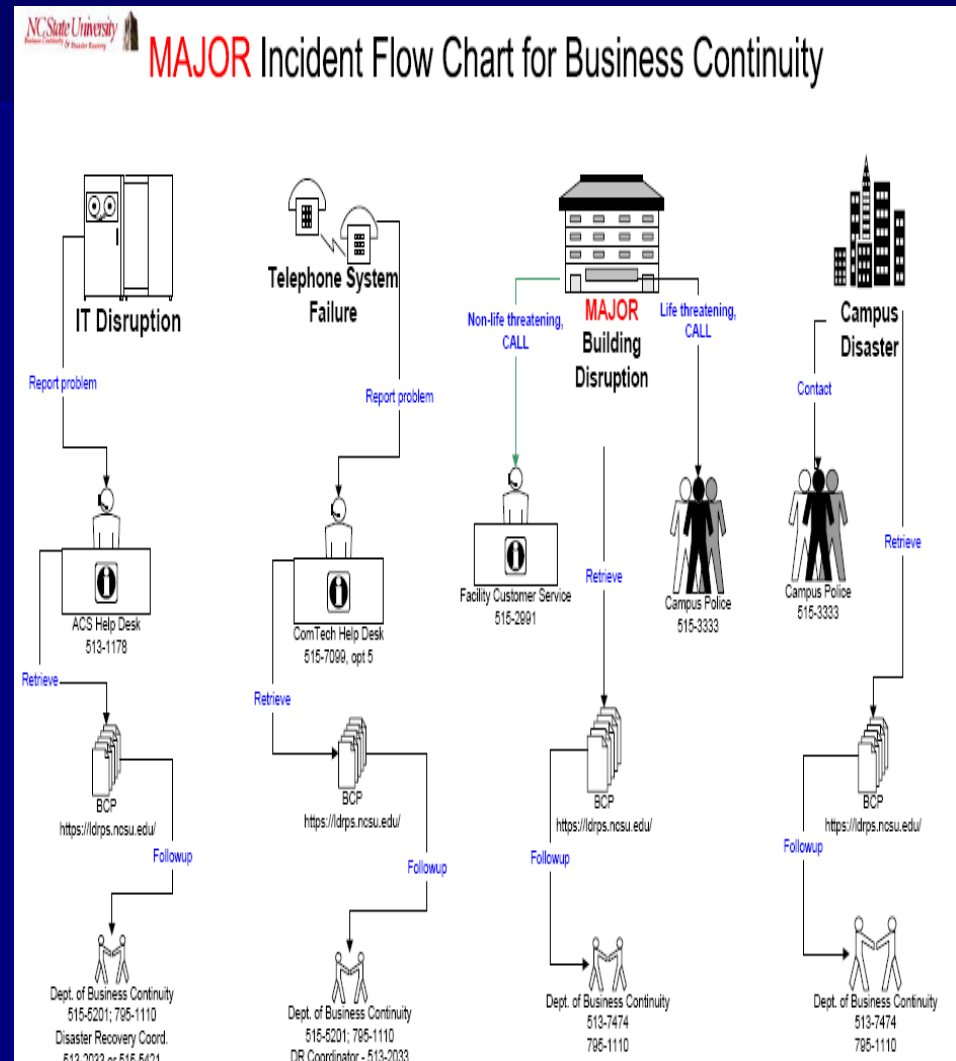
Step 3: Create Plans

Gather Data for Constructing the Plan

- Compile key information to include in your plan:
 - Employee Lists/Staff directories
 - Hardware/Software/Asset inventories
 - Vendor lists
 - IT architecture documents
 - Leadership succession plans

Step 3: Create Plans

- Outline internal/external notification protocols
- Determine triggers for activation of business continuity plans



Step 4 – Educate and Validate

- Plans are no good if no one knows about them
- Anyone could be impacted by pandemic—multiple people need to understand how to implement the plan
- Plans need to be tested and validated before a crisis occurs

Step 4 – Educate and Validate

- Create trainings and exercises for staff to raise awareness of the plan
- Validate assumptions of the plan



Step 5 – Maintain and Improve

- Testing will reveal areas of plan that need to be reworked or improved
- Someone or some team within the organization needs to regularly update plan
- Everyone in organization needs to understand his or her role in a crisis

Elements of Business Continuity Plans

Key Issues to Consider in Business Continuity Plans

- Continuity of Services
- Public and Media Relations
- Security
- Internal/External Communications
- Supply Chains: Critical Inputs/Outputs
- Legal Issues
- Information Systems, Technology and Databases
- Employee Health/Safety

Continuity of Services

- Prioritization of business activities
- Chain of command / succession planning
- Cross training of staff
 - Job sheets with key responsibilities for each position

Employee Health and Safety

- Promotion of personal preparedness
- Stockpiling of PPE
- Review of HR policies – leave, travel, insurance
- Workplace infection control
- Preparation for mental health services via employee assistance programs

Communication

- Emergency Communications Plan
- Contact lists and call trees
- Method for communication with customers
- Method for communication with suppliers
- Redundant modes of communication

Remote Access

- During pandemics, schools and childcare may be closed for weeks or months
- Social distancing strategies may ask non-essential personnel to work from home
- IT considerations include creating secure network access pathways

Information Technology

- Storage of critical information
- Data access and retrieval
- Secure access to all resources, not just e-mail, for remote workers
- Routine system back-ups
- Personnel required to maintain systems



Resources

- <http://cidrapsource.com/source/index.html>
- http://www.ready.gov/business/_downloads/sampleplan.pdf
- <http://www.tampabaydisaster.org/fldisasterkit/pdfs/template.pdf>
- <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html>
- http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/gcdc/pandemic/AppendixS1_2007.pdf

Conclusions

- Business Continuity Plans should be developed before events occur
- Business continuity planning for pandemics is different from planning for “normal” disasters
- Resources exist to help you, but each organization has to develop its own plan