



Executive Summary:
**Survey on Business
Response to the
Influenza A H1N1 Outbreak**

May 2009



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Introduction

In April 2009, businesses, schools, governments, health organizations, and individuals across the globe were focused on the potentially devastating spread of the Influenza A H1N1 virus. Fortunately, by mid-May 2009, the virus had proved to be, at least at the time of this writing, a less serious threat than originally thought just a few weeks earlier. But the story could have been very different, and there is value in examining and learning from the collective company responses during one of the more critical weeks of the virus's evolution.

From April 30 through May 6, ORC Worldwide collected information related to business response to the spread of the Influenza A H1N1 virus on behalf of the members of the ORC Networks community. More specifically, ORC collected information from 101 member companies related to four areas:

- Business-related travel
- Post-travel-related actions
- Infection control and health protection
- Emergency evacuations of expatriates in affected areas

In conjunction with this survey, members were also invited to participate in a series of conference calls designed to share substantive information in a more interactive and timely manner.

Members of the ORC Networks community have shared their practices in the context of this survey as they so often do in other venues as part of their membership – in the spirit of achieving better outcomes for their individual organizations, the individuals that their organizations employ, and the global communities in which they operate. It is our hope that through surveys such as this one, ORC Worldwide can contribute to advancing the state of preparedness for any future events requiring swift yet thoughtful action to ensure business continuity and personal safety.

Through the course of this survey and the previously mentioned conference calls, members have generously offered to share various policies and documentation related to business continuity and pandemic planning. For more information, please visit ORC Worldwide's Environmental Health & Safety Center of Excellence at www.orcehs.org.

While a detailed survey document has been made available to members who responded to the survey, the attached summarized report is being provided to members of the ORC Networks community.

Executive Summary/Key Findings

Business-Related Travel

- Approximately 55% of responding companies implemented some changes to business travel practices as a result of the recent outbreak. These changes included banning all nonessential travel, banning all nonessential travel to affected areas, requiring higher level approval for travel to various locations, and specific restrictions related to travel to Mexico. It is worth noting that another 16% had already banned nonessential travel prior to the H1N1 outbreak due to economic conditions.
- It is most prevalent for companies to base decisions on implementing business travel restrictions and escalations within their pandemic preparedness/business continuity plans on a number of sources including but not limited to CDC, WHO, and EU Health Commissioner in addition to reports of human-to-human transmission in a location and report of associated deaths.
- While some companies reported having provided various supplies to business travelers such as hand sanitizers (34%) and/or surgical masks (23%), the most common action has been to provide communication in the form of a company contact number for medical advice while on business travel (55%) and/or additional briefings or medical advice (39%).

Post-Travel-Related Actions

- Only 37% of the companies had implemented mandatory quarantine periods following travel to locations with confirmed cases of H1N1 virus with 58% of the respondents reporting that these quarantine periods are from five to 10 days in length.
- The employees were not paid for the mandatory quarantine period in less than 3% of the responding companies.
- Of those companies reporting mandatory quarantine periods, slightly less than half (43.9%) allow employees to return to work without any medical screening.

Infection Control and Health Protection

- 84% of the companies responding report having some type of business continuity or pandemic preparedness plan to handle global outbreaks of this nature.
- Fewer than one-third of the respondents reported currently engaging in employee screening, with slightly fewer currently engaging in some type of screening of visitors or contractors.
- Less than 10% of the companies responding report handling packages from affected areas in a different fashion than packages from non-affected areas.
- Fewer than half of the respondents report having established (or being in the process of establishing) communications with the local government health departments in the locations in which they have facilities.

Expatriate Evacuation

- Only 3% of responding companies had already evacuated expatriates and families from affected locations.
- Less than 10% of the companies report allowances being suspended for periods of mandatory evacuation from expatriated locations.
- More than half of the respondents report handling on a case-by-case basis situations in which the company decides NOT to evacuate and the expatriate requests to leave.

Other Points

- Nearly 82% of companies responding indicated that they would be interested in networking with other companies on this issue.
- Nearly 75% of the respondents would be willing to share company policies and procedures anonymously with other companies who were also willing to share.