

Pandemic Disruption Plan

Saskatchewan Research Council

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Definitions/Terminology

BCP	Business Continuity Plan – keystone document for the corporate level coordination and synchronization of continuity initiatives such as disruption management, information management, business resumption and program maintenance.
BRP	Business Resumption Plan – a division’s organized response to a disruptive event designed to maintain critical business operations at an acceptable level during and after an adverse event.
DMT	Disruption Management Team – SRC’s disruption management team; membership is based on the established Executive Team (ET).
DMT Leader	Disruption Management Team Leader – President and CEO or designated alternate.
RT	Recovery Team – Division teams responsible for the recovery of critical functions. Team leaders are the vice-presidents or their designated alternate.
PDP	Pandemic Disruption Plan – A plan designed to assist in the event of a disruption which reduces the ability of SRC employees to attend work.

A. Introduction

1. Pandemics

A pandemic is a sudden disease outbreak that becomes very widespread and affects a whole region, a continent, or the world. In modern times, pandemics have most often been the result of a sudden mutation of the influenza virus, however other pandemics of history have included cholera, typhus, smallpox and bubonic plague.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a pandemic can start when three conditions have been met:

- Emergence of a disease new to a population.
- Agents infect humans, causing serious illness.
- Agents spread easily and sustainably among humans.

A disease or condition is not a pandemic merely because it is widespread or kills many people; it must also be infectious. For instance, cancer is responsible for many deaths but is not considered a pandemic because the disease is neither infectious nor contagious.

2. Enterprise Risk Management and Pandemics

Risks and Risk Tolerances

The challenge presented by pandemics is that many of the impacts are difficult to quantify or to estimate. Any decisions on mitigating pandemic impacts must be done in the context of SRC's risk tolerances and appetites.

Applicable Risk Categories:

Safety Risk

Appetite Statement: Occupational Health and Safety are the overriding priorities and explicitly take precedence over achieving business objectives. SRC will ensure compliance with legal requirements and will strive to achieve world class safety performance.

Reputational Risk

Appetite Statement: SRC considers its reputation and brand value to be two of its most important assets and will take a proactive approach to managing them in a consistent manner to maximize positive perceptions.

Human Resources Risk

Appetite Statement: SRC's actions will demonstrate that its employees are its most important asset. SRC attracts, retains and develops quality employees by ensuring compliance with legal requirements and developing appropriate human resources to ensure employee engagement.

Financial Risk

Appetite Statement: SRC will manage the business in such a way as to allow SRC to operate effectively in a fiscally responsible manner in fulfilling strategy.

Applicable Risk Statements:

- F4: Failure to maintain sufficient liquidity.
- SRC will manage its cash flow in a fiscally responsible manner such that opportunities can be realized.
- F5: Failure to adequately manage expenses.
- SRC will strategically utilize all financial resources and manage the business in a fiscally responsible manner.
- HR6: Failure to retain high quality employees.
- SRC will not lose high quality employees for controllable reasons.
- O4: Failure to adequately manage through a disruption.
- SRC will implement business continuity plans and processes that will ensure successful management during and recovery after a disruption.
- S4: Failure to comply with regulatory requirements.
- SRC will not knowingly violate any applicable regulatory requirement.

SRC's Pandemic Plan will be compliant with these risk appetite and tolerance statements to the extent practical and in those cases where it is not, the rationale and mitigating strategies will be documented in compliance with SRC's policies.

B. Planning and Preparation**1. Pandemic Business Continuity**

Driven in part by the SRC's Enterprise Risk Management program, the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is designed to coordinate risk control and mitigation activities from a range of credible or potentially disruptive events. The Pandemic Disruption Plan (PDP) is designed to supplement the BCP in the management of the challenges unique to a pandemic.

Typical disruptions result in the loss of assets and are usually short term in nature (i.e. fire, flood, tornado) with the recovery period occurring over a longer period.

Pandemics differ from these events in that they typically do not involve loss of assets; rather, they involve the inability to access employees. The events occur in the opposite manner of most disruptions in that the triggering events tend to be longer term in nature while the post event recovery can occur quite quickly. Pandemic influenza has historically lasted for 12 to 18 months.

The other major difference is that traditional disruptions occur with little or no warning. Events leading up to pandemics typically provide days or weeks notice of an increasing likelihood of the disruption. This allows much of the initial activity to be focused on impact mitigation rather than recovery.

2. Pandemic Communications

SRC will rely upon information provided by experts in developing its communications plans during a pandemic event. SRC will ensure that employees are updated regarding the event via email and internal website announcements. The commencement and extent of stakeholder communication will be determined based on analysis of the prevailing and expected situation. Content will be developed based on information obtained from Saskatchewan Emergency Management Organization (SaskEMO), Saskatchewan Health, Health Canada, Centre for Disease Control in the United States, and the World Health Organization amongst others.

3. Planning Assumptions

Pandemic planning requires flexibility in dealing with varying magnitudes of impacts and therefore SRC will base the following plan on the general and specific assumptions. All planning scenarios should be considered equally likely, however best practices in the business continuity field recommend ensuring plans are able to respond to the worst case. These projections are used only to assess impact.

General Assumptions:

- SRC will in all cases attempt to maintain some level of operations.
- SRC's planning will align with its strategy and sub-strategies as appropriate.
- SRC will stay within its Risk Appetites and Risk Tolerances wherever practical and where not, will follow its non-conformance reporting policies.
- SRC will maintain current policies and procedures wherever practical, but consideration will be given to those policies and procedures that need to be reviewed/revised to fit the given circumstances.
- All divisions and business units may not be considered equally critical.
- There will be limited ability to transfer skills between business units and divisions.

- Pandemic situations will occur in three waves over an 18 month period with each wave lasting 10 weeks.
- The nature of SRC's business limits its ability to facilitate social distancing for some Research and Technology divisions and business units.

Impacts:

Some impacts require a degree of subjectivity in calculating their magnitude due to difficulty in assessing the actual scale of their usage and the non-quantifiable effects they may have.

Potential Impacts:

- Employees
 - Increased usage of employee assistance programs due to personal impacts from the pandemic (i.e. loss or serious illness in loved one) or work related stress from increased workload.
 - Increased demand for vaccinations.
 - Changes in employee perception of management due to perceived positive or negative treatment.
 - Gaps in workforce skill sets due to layoffs or fatalities.
- Financial
 - Cash flow impacts and litigation risks from slower project delivery, lowered ability to manage payables and receivables at SRC or its clients.
 - Financial impact of reimbursements for trip cancellations.
 - Management of human resource costs associated with layoffs and rehiring/recruiting if utilized.
 - Loss of client revenue due to impaired project delivery and reduced business development activities.
- Reputational
 - Potential misalignment with shareholder expectations or enhanced perception due to premium management of situation and ability to deliver key services throughout the disruption.
 - Changes in clients' perceptions due to delayed/undeliverable projects or ability to continue to deliver on commitments throughout the disruption.
- Legal
 - Potential litigation due to SRC's failure to meet its contractual obligations.

SRC's Response:

SRC 's response will be guided by recommendations from Saskatchewan Health, other applicable provincial ministries, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). SRC will review these recommendations to determine their applicability to SRC. For reference some potential responses are outlined below.

Negligible Event:

- Characteristics may include:
 - Saskatchewan Health, PHAC, and other provincial and international centres for disease control indicate a new pandemic virus has been identified, however its incidence in Saskatchewan is limited.
 - Saskatchewan Health providing general recommendations regarding preventative measures.
 - No noticeable impacts on SRC's ability to deliver on its contractual requirements.

- Actions to consider implementing:
 - Apply standard sick leave/pressing necessity leave policies.
 - Handle situations outside the norm on a case-by-case basis.
 - Initiate employee communications based on best practices and expert advice.

Minor Event:

- Characteristics may include:
 - Saskatchewan Health and PHAC report increased cases of the occurrence of the pandemic virus in Saskatchewan.
 - Saskatchewan Ministries and PHAC provide general recommendations regarding preventative measures as well as recommendations that ill employees be sent home until symptoms resolve.
 - Minor impact (approximately 10%) on SRC's ability to deliver on its contractual requirements.

- Actions to consider implementing:
 - Apply standard sick leave/pressing necessity leave policies.
 - Continue employee communications based on best practices and expert advice.
 - Issue messaging to employees that encourages sick employees to stay away from work until symptoms resolve and the preventative measures recommended by Saskatchewan Health.
 - Encourage Division Vice-Presidents to be aware of absenteeism in their divisions and to report any concerns to ET.
 - Handle situations outside the norm on a case-by-case basis.

Moderate Event:

- Characteristics may include:
 - Saskatchewan Health, PHAC, and other provincial and international centres for disease control begin to report cases of increased disease virulence or frequency.
 - Saskatchewan Ministries and PHAC issue specific recommendations that ill employees be sent home until symptoms resolve.
 - Increased incidents of absenteeism with moderate impacts (approximately 20%) to SRC's ability to deliver on its contractual requirements.

- Actions to consider implementing:
 - Apply standard sick leave/pressing necessity leave policies.
 - Continue employee communications based on best practices and expert advice
 - Begin to identify areas of human resource practices that may need to be reviewed during pandemic impact such as leave policies and alternative work arrangements in accordance with all relevant employment-related legislation and applicable human resource policies and contracts.
 - Review all recommendations from applicable provincial ministries and PHAC for applicability to SRC.
 - Issue messaging to employees that strongly encourages sick employees to stay away from work until symptoms resolve.
 - Division Vice-Presidents are instructed to be aware of absenteeism in their divisions and report the extent of impact to ET.
 - Assess projects being impacted to determine need to contact stakeholders.
 - Identify options to facilitate social distancing/work from home as deemed necessary and appropriate (i.e. conference calls, email, webcam, etc.).
 - Handle situations outside the norm on a case-by-case basis.

Major Event:

- Characteristics may include:
 - Saskatchewan Health, PHAC, and other provincial and international Centres for Disease Control begin to report cases of significantly increased disease virulence or frequency.
 - School and day-care closures.
 - Saskatchewan Ministries and PHAC issue specific recommendations that ill employees be sent home until symptoms resolve.
 - Increased incidents of absenteeism with major impacts (approximately 30%) to SRC's ability to deliver on its contractual requirements.
- Actions to consider implementing:
 - Apply standard sick leave/pressing necessity leave policies.
 - Continue employee communications based on best practices and expert advice
 - Identify additional areas of human resource practices that may need to be reviewed during pandemic impact, such as leave policies and alternative work arrangements, in accordance with all relevant employment-related legislation and applicable human resource policies and contracts.
 - Review all recommendations from applicable provincial ministries and PHAC for applicability to SRC.
 - Instruct managers to require sick employees to stay away from work until symptoms resolve.
 - Division Vice-Presidents are required to be aware of absenteeism in their divisions and report extent of impact to ET weekly.
 - Assess projects being impacted to determine need to contact stakeholders.

- Determine if voluntary cancellation or rescheduling of employee leaves will mitigate impacts.
- Facilitate social distancing/work from home as deemed necessary, safe and appropriate (i.e. conference calls, email, webcam, etc.).
- Handle situations outside the norm on a case-by-case basis.

Extreme Event:

- Characteristics may include:
 - Saskatchewan Health, PHAC, and other provincial and international centres for disease control begin to report cases of major increase in disease virulence or frequency.
 - School, day-care closures.
 - Public gatherings and events cancelled
 - Saskatchewan Ministries and PHAC issue specific recommendations that ill employees be sent home until symptoms resolve.
 - Increased incidents of absenteeism with major impacts (40% or greater) to SRC's ability to deliver on its contractual requirements.

- Actions to consider implementing:
 - Apply standard sick leave/pressing necessity leave policies.
 - Continue employee communications based on best practices and expert advice
 - Identify additional areas of human resource practices that may need to be reviewed during pandemic impact such as leave policies and alternative work arrangements in accordance with all relevant employment-related legislation and applicable human resource policies and contracts.
 - Review all recommendations from applicable provincial ministries and PHAC for applicability to SRC.
 - Instruct managers to require sick employees to stay away from work until symptoms resolve.
 - Division Vice-Presidents are required to be aware of absenteeism in their divisions and report extent of impact to ET daily.
 - Institute mandatory cancellation or rescheduling of employee leaves where required for functionality.
 - Facilitate social distancing/work from home as deemed necessary, safe, and appropriate (i.e. conference calls, email, webcam, etc.).
 - Handle situations outside the norm on a case-by-case basis.

C. Continuity Coordination

1. Impact Assessment

1.1 Disruption management

The Disruption Management Team (DMT) Leader must immediately be notified and kept abreast of developments in a timely manner. He/she will activate the DMT or elements of the DMT as dictated by the circumstances and assess the situation through consultation with the involved division, business unit/s and members of the DMT.

1.2 SRC's priorities during a Pandemic Disruption are:

- Life, safety, health and security of employees.
- Effective communications with internal and external audiences.
- Completion and delivery of contractual obligations.
- Preservation of the integrity of client materials.
- Preservation of the integrity of vital records, reports, research documents and databases.

2. Declaration and Invocation

2.1 Lead Time

Within pandemics, there is often significant lead time that can be used to prepare for the actual event. While actual lead time for a pandemic is unknown, best estimates allow for 4-6 weeks from the point of increased human to human transmission to full scale pandemic assuming. If North America was the source, this lead time would be considerably shortened.

2.2 Invocation – notification

Based on leading indicators, the DMT Leader will formally communicate the “**disruption declaration**” to invoke the PDP plan if he/she feels the likelihood of the PDP is such that SRC's standard coping strategies are insufficient to control the disruption and SRC's stakeholders need to be informed. In the case of pandemics, recent experience has taught that regardless of the pandemic alert level, the best trigger is when the business begins to be impacted outside of the norm. With a local disease breakout, the trigger would be more subjective.

The formal declaration of a disruption will initially be communicated by the DMT Leader to:

- Division Recovery Team leaders and all employees.
- Board of Directors.
- Provincial government authorities.
- Responsible Building Authorities (landlords) e.g. access to buildings during quarantine and ventilation systems during a pandemic.

2.3 Result of disruption declaration

The DMT Leader's decision to "**declare a disruption**" is also the decision to invoke the PDP plan(s) and begin activities to limit the impact of the PDP.

2.4 Disruption Management Team (DMT) core responsibilities

- Assess the effects of the PDP on SRC's critical functions.
- Lead and coordinate the mitigation process and all mitigating activities.
- Develop key messages related to the response and mitigation process.
- Develop and implement financial and strategic decisions related to the mitigation and resumption processes.
- Set priorities for the operation of business units based on the impact and need to maintain those areas.
- Arrange for emergency funding if required.
- Record and document recovery decisions and activities.

3. Communications

3.1 The Business Ventures and Communications team will develop **key messages** for key audiences with the assistance of the DMT members.

3.2 The Business Ventures and Communications team is responsible for managing and coordinating SRC's communication plan. All SRC divisions will work with this team to release information to employees, media or clients that is related to the disruption.

3.3 Key audiences include:

- SRC employees and families;
- Board of Directors;
- Minister Responsible for SRC;
- SRC clients and partners; and
- Media.

3.4 Internal communications

The Business Ventures and Communications team's goals are to coordinate information releases and ensure SRC employees are informed in a timely fashion.

Communications relative to the general situation and SRC activities will be developed by Business Ventures and Communications.

Communications specific to division Recovery Team activities, such as employee tasks, reporting instructions and division situation updates, will be delivered to their employees and team members by the division Recovery Team leaders.

3.5 External communications

All press releases and public announcements will originate from the office of the President and CEO.

SRC's Business Ventures and Communications team will be the first point of contact for media inquiries regarding SRC. All media calls to SRC will be referred to the Business Ventures and Communications.

The DMT leader may delegate the release of key messages to clients and partners by division RT Leaders.

4. Division Recovery Teams

The Division Recovery Teams (RT) are the backbone of SRC's client services business mitigating initiatives and capabilities.

4.1 Recovery Team organization will be based on the divisional business unit structure. Each division will develop their team membership based on the division's day-to-day management relationships.

4.2 **RT priorities** are:

- Life, safety, health and security of employees.
- Mitigate the impact and maximize SRC's ability to continue to operate.

5. Priority of Business Unit Operation

SRC's ability to initiate any mitigating activities will be fully dependent on the nature and scope of the pandemic disruption.

Each division will be required to allocate its resources to best meet SRC's needs and minimize negative impacts. The magnitude of absenteeism and which individuals are affected will determine which operations to focus on and, based on that decision, which resources to obtain and protect. Consideration should be given to which functions can be done remotely to facilitate social distancing and free alternative workspace.

In the case of a pandemic, it is likely to occur in multiple waves of increasing and decreasing severity. The periods of relative improvement between spikes should be used to reassess operations and adapt/restock as required.

D. Summary

Managing through a pandemic will be dependent on SRC's ability to manage both its employees and stakeholder relationships. In addition, strong management of resources required to operate will be fundamental to success. Efforts must continue to align SRC with quality partners and manage client relationships to ensure success.

E. Related Documents

[SRC Strategic Plan](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Strategy](#)

Communications and Branding Strategy

Enterprise Risk Management Strategy

Emergency Response Plan

Business Continuity Plan

Divisional Recovery Team Plans

Human Resources Policies

Appendix A

How To Differentiate: Allergies, Cold, Flu

SYMPTOMS	COLD	ALLERGY	INFLUENZA
Fever	Rare	Rare	Very common
Headache	Sometimes	Unusual	Usual - can be severe
General aches and pains	Sometimes, mild	Rare	Usual - often severe
Fatigue and weakness	Sometimes, mild	Rare	Usual, severe
Extreme fatigue	Unusual	Rare	Usual early onset - can be severe
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Very common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Common	Very common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Sometimes	Unusual	Very Common
Cough	Sometimes	Unusual	Very Common
Chest discomfort, coughing	Sometimes, mild	Rare	Usual - can be severe

Source: Slide presentation made September, 2009 by Saqib Shahab, Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer, Ministry of Health

Appendix B

How is Influenza Spread?

H1N1 influenza is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza.

- It can be spread directly from person to person through coughing or sneezing.
- It can be spread indirectly by touching contaminated items then touching the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Transmission is most likely to occur during the first few days of obvious illness. It is recommended that persons who are ill with influenza symptoms should stay home from work or school and limit contact with others and not return to routine activities outside the home until they are symptom free.
- Influenza is a respiratory illness and cannot be spread through food.

What Employees Can Do To Protect Themselves and Others?

1. Wash hands often with:
 - a. soap and warm water, or
 - b. a gel or alcohol based hand cleanser.
2. Practice cough etiquette
 - a. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - b. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your elbow NOT your hands.
3. Stay home if you are feeling ill until symptoms resolve. Consult your physician/health care provider if appropriate. Contact your Supervisor to report your absence and inform your Supervisor if the cause of your absence is influenza-like-illness (ILI) symptoms
4. Have a plan for alternate child care if child cannot go to school or daycare.
5. Employees should take advantage of H1N1 vaccinations when available if they feel it is appropriate for them. SRC will facilitate this process when the option is available to do so.

Source: SaskHealth Website: H1N1 Flu Virus - Common Questions
<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/H1N1-flu-questions>