

**— Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP) —
Preparing the BEST tabletop exercise
Exercise Design Workshop/Exercise**



**Sponsored by
Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)
Louisville, Kentucky
October 8, 2009**

Workshop and exercise prepared and delivered by :

Regina Phelps, CEM, RN, BSN, MPA

Principal

EMS Solutions Inc.

260 Whitney Street

San Francisco, CA 94131

415-643-4300 voice

415-643-4621 fax

www.ems-solutionsinc.com

H1N1 pandemic flu blog - <http://emssolutionsinc.wordpress.com>

**Preparing the BEST Tabletop Exercise
Table of Contents**

WORKSHOP/EXERCISE AGENDA..... 3

WORKSHOP/EXERCISE INTRODUCTION..... 4

 GOAL 4

 WORKSHOP SCOPE 4

 OBJECTIVES 4

 WORKSHOP EXERCISE ASSUMPTIONS AND ARTIFICIALITIES..... 4

 SAFETY & SECURITY PLAN..... 5

 EXERCISE ROLES AT EACH TABLE..... 5

 EXERCISE REPORT-OUTS 5

FACILITATED EXERCISE 6

 EXERCISE TYPE AND SCOPE 6

 EXERCISE GOALS 6

 EXERCISE AGENDA 6

 EXERCISE OBJECTIVES 6

 INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS 7

 COMMUNICATIONS 7

 EVALUATION 7

 ARTIFICIALITIES AND STATISTICS 7

 NARRATIVE..... 8

EXERCISE DISCUSSION 11

 EMPLOYEE FEAR AND ANXIETY 11

 EMPLOYEE DISTANCING IN THE WORKPLACE 11

 GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE..... 12

 TRAINING..... 12

 EMPLOYEE SUPPORT 12

 CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS 13

 FACILITIES OPERATIONS 13

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

WORKSHOP/EXERCISE AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Arrival/Registration Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 9:10 AM	Introduction and opening remarks
9:10 – 12:00 PM	Preparing the BEST tabletop exercise
12:00 – 12:45 PM	Lunch Break
12:45 – 3:15 PM	Facilitated exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Tabletop discussions in response to a series of business and employee protection issues</i>• <i>Report-out and sharing of solutions among participants</i>
3:15 – 3:45 PM	Exercise debriefing
3:45 – 4:00 PM	Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Key learnings</i>• <i>Next steps,</i>• <i>Brief closing remarks</i>

WORKSHOP/EXERCISE INTRODUCTION

Goal

The goal of this workshop/exercise is to bring business continuity professionals together to learn about tabletop exercise design, to learn from each other, and to allow them to experience – through an exercise environment – the type of issues that they are likely to face in a pandemic. This collective experience, along with sharing ideas, will further develop the individuals' awareness and knowledge of how to design an exercise and how to manage in a pandemic. The exercise is designed to allow them to experience firsthand the challenges and difficulties they will face during a moderate or severe influenza pandemic. Through this experiential learning, the goal is that participants will learn the pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods that they can employ during a pandemic. Through this open environment, participants will have the opportunity to “try on” different strategies and, at the same time, “water-test” their own pandemic plans.

Workshop Scope

The workshop will consist of the following:

- Exercise design lecture.
- One tabletop exercise.

Objectives

1. Review “Preparing the BEST Tabletop Exercise.”
2. Facilitate a robust conversation among participants through the use of interactive exercises to explore employee protection strategies.
3. Experience a moderate to severe pandemic scenario and explore recovery and mitigation strategies.

Workshop Exercise Assumptions and Artificialities

In any exercise, a number of assumptions and artificialities may be necessary to achieve the desired goals in the time allotted, and to present the necessary developments to enable participants to achieve exercise objectives.

- It is assumed that the events and incidents which will be presented are plausible and events occur as they are stated.
- In order to facilitate learning and exploring possibilities, a healthy dose of “exercise magic” has been used. You are asked not to debate whether something has happened, can happen or is available, it just is.
- Exercises have the greatest value if they are treated as real. Please stay in role.
- Don't just think about what is currently facing you; remember to keep one eye on the future.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- Exercises are for learning and mistakes are expected (and are almost required). This is a time to explore possible responses with a group before the pandemic actually occurs.

Safety & Security Plan

- All personnel participating in the exercise are responsible to ensure a safe and secure site.
- All participants and observers will be issued stickers or badges to identify their participation.
- As members of the exercise control team, facilitators are responsible for monitoring and assessing hazardous and unsafe situations and developing measures for assuring personnel health and safety.
- The phrase ***“This is a real-world emergency”*** will be used to indicate a real emergency not related to the exercise, and will stop the exercise immediately.

Exercise Roles at Each Table

Before the exercise begins, two volunteers are needed to complete the following roles. These roles are important to the success of the exercise:

1. A **table spokesperson**, who will give a short 3- to 5-minute summary of your table’s discussion.
2. A **table scribe**, who will be asked to capture the key points of the conversation so the team can report out its findings.

Exercise Report-Outs

At the end of the exercise, each table will report out on a variety of the question discussions held at each table.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

FACILITATED EXERCISE

Exercise Type and Scope

- Tabletop exercise using pre-scripted inputs, a simulation team, and media inputs.
- Activation of the full Incident Management Team (IMT).

Exercise Goals

- Experience a global pandemic event that impacts the company office and its staff.
- Assess the ability of the IMT to manage the event.

Exercise Agenda

TIME	AGENDA	DISCUSSION LEADER
12:45 – 3:15 PM	Facilitated exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Tabletop discussions in response to a series of business and employee protection issues</i>• <i>Report-out and sharing of solutions among participants</i>	Regina Phelps
3:15 – 3:45 PM	Exercise debriefing	Phelps
3:45 – 4:00 PM	Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Key learnings</i>• <i>Next Steps</i>• <i>Brief Closing Remarks</i>	Phelps

Exercise Objectives

- a. Orient new team members to their roles.
- b. Assess the effectiveness of the Incident Management Plan in dealing with a global pandemic. Note areas for improvement and modification.
- c. Assess the ability of the IMT to develop the company message, and produce the following communication materials: communications via email and web to employees and other internal stakeholders.
- d. Assess the ability of the Incident Commander (IC) and designated team leaders to conduct a timely Incident Action Planning meeting and post results in the EOC (Emergency Operations Center).
- e. Assess IMT plan and the EOC facility for completeness.
- f. Assess the business continuity plans to manage the business needs and concerns following an outage.
 - Assess ability for business units to develop detailed work plans for a company outage, and continue operations for an extended period of time.
 - Assess the ability of the company business units to “pass the book of business” to other locations around the world to continue operations.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

Instructions to Participants

- Exercises have the greatest value if they are treated as real. Stay in role the entire time.
- Don't just think about responding to what is coming at you – remember to keep one eye into the future and play the game of “what-if.”
- As the exercise progresses, details may not be as complete as you would like. The value is in the process, the dialogue, and the experience. The design team has worked to make the situations as realistic as possible.
- You may only use what is in place as of today; if new equipment is being added next month, it is not in place and can't be used.
- Exercises are for learning; we expect mistakes. The goal is to develop the team and learn from the experience.
- In order to make this exercise work and to facilitate the learning process, a certain amount of "exercise magic" has been used. We ask you not to debate that something has happened, could have happened, or is available – it just is!
- There is no “pass” or “fail” in this exercise. It is expected that many mistakes will be made – an exercise is a valuable learning experience to see if the plans that were developed are sufficient.
- Questions regarding the exercise should be directed to the exercise facilitator, Regina Phelps.

Communications

- At the conclusion of the exercise, tables will report out their findings.
- All information in the narrative and that provided by the facilitators is to be considered valid. However, just like in a real disaster, messages can be jumbled, and rumors can start on incorrect information or assumptions.
- Multiple versions of the same problem may occur.

Evaluation

The exercise will be evaluated by use of participant written evaluations, the debrief session, and facilitators' observations based on the objectives.

Artificialities and Statistics

FOR PURPOSES OF THE EXERCISE, TODAY IS TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2009

- *Artificialities*
 - All 195 countries in the world have reported active cases of H1N1.
 - An actual number of cases is not available since the World Health Organization (WHO) announced on 16 July 2009 that they would no longer count cases due to the wide-spread nature of the illness.
 - For the most part, the illness has been mild; however in younger populations (between 12 and 30 years of age), it has been increasing in severity, and there have been an increasing number of deaths.
 - The start of the flu season in the northern hemisphere has been marked with widespread illness. This has affected all company offices, and has resulted in some challenges in processing work.
 - Anecdotally and in talking with managers, it is estimated that there is approximately 20% absenteeism at the office.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- *Statistics*
 - Attack rate of virus (number of people getting infected) = 30%.
 - Mortality rate (number of infected people dying) = 0.2%.
 - Median affected age = Between 20 and 25 years. 80% of those hospitalized were under 50 years of age.
 - Males and females are being infected equally.
 - Estimates of infections and deaths:
 - Worldwide:
 - Infections/Illness = 499,523,127 (est. due to lack of reporting)
 - Deaths = 3,990,462
 - U.S.:
 - Infections/Illness = 9,103,280 (est. due to lack of reporting)
 - Deaths = 18,206

Narrative

World Response

- Borders are generally open, but travel is very limited, as is the movement of goods.
- Airports remain open, however, most commercial flights are extremely curtailed or cancelled due to public health concerns.
- Food and supply shortages are starting to appear in most developing regions of the world.
- Financial analysts predict that this pandemic will create an even more severe worldwide recession.
- There is a growing worldwide shortage of raw materials for manufacturing and supplies due to disruptions in the supply chain from border closures and personnel shortages. Just-in-time supply systems are making this situation worse.
- Health systems in many countries are collapsing under the weight of massive amounts of people seeking medical care. In addition to the usual amount of people seeking medical care for common problems, there are large amounts of “worried well” seeking care for minor problems that they perceive as flu-related.
- There is still a tremendous amount of anxiety throughout the world.
- Vaccine production is continuing and is available in limited quantities in the developed nations.

United States Response

- Borders are open, but the flow of goods is diminished. Personnel shortages at ports are limiting the amounts of good that are offloaded from cargo ships.
- Transportation:
 - Airports remain open, however, most commercial airline flights have been cancelled. Flight schedules are severely limited.
 - Commuter rail and bus services are continuing under limited schedules in many parts of the country.
- There is a tremendous amount of speculation as to the long-term financial impact on the region’s economy.
 - The U.S. financial markets continue to slide, sometimes precipitously, based on rumors and speculation.
- There is a booming trade in black market anti-viral medications. Health professionals are warning people to be wary of counterfeit drugs purchased over the Internet and through other non-traditional sources.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- The telecommunications network is generally intact. Some ISPs are reporting network congestion and scattered outages as the demand for Internet access has greatly increased. Telephone networks are reporting higher-than-normal volume, and there are some cellular network outages across the country.
- Electric utilities have maintained service, but there are increasing delays in emergency restoration of service.
- There is a tremendous amount of anxiety throughout the region fueled by constant media reports of deaths and illness.
- Manufacturing output has diminished sharply due to illness among workers and lack of supplies and raw materials. Some companies have had serious problems with debt service.
- Public gatherings in such venues as churches, theaters, restaurants, malls, and sporting arenas are restricted as necessary in many communities.
- There was an initial rush to purchase masks, gloves, and disinfectants. When these items are still available, they cost approximately 10 times their normal price.
- Grocery store shelves are restocked when supplies come in. When deliveries arrive, the shelves are quickly raided. Deliveries are running about 40% of normal volume.
- Most schools, colleges, and universities remain open although instruction has suffered due to less staff and students. Many daycare centers are closed.
- The health system is overwhelmed with people:
 - Those seeking care for problems they believe are related to pandemic influenza.
 - Those who actually have the flu.
 - Those who have their usual medical problems.
- The situation at hospitals has been made worse because many local clinics have closed their facilities. Elective surgery has been cancelled. In most locations, anti-viral medications are in short supply. Availability of antibiotics used to treat secondary infections and pneumonia has been affected by the supply-chain disruptions. The general wait-time in emergency departments for non-flu complaints (such as heart attacks and diabetes-related problems) has greatly increased. Health systems are experiencing staff shortages.
- Gasoline, diesel, and LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) are available although some areas have experienced shortages.
- The public is concerned that the government does not have enough antivirals to accommodate all infected people.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

Your Company Status Overview

- The company has some people working from home, but many are having difficulties due to phone and equipment problems.
- For those who must work on-site, long work days are taking a toll.
- Your employee absentee rate is hovering between 20% and 25%. Some departments, especially those with younger employees under 30 years old, have been especially hard hit.
- Management ranks have been thinned, with surrogates stepping in to make decisions – sometimes without appropriate background or training. Top leaders who are still available are stressed trying to hold things together.
- The HR department is totally overwhelmed between its own decrease in staff and dealing with all the personnel problems and issues.
- Two employees who were out due to H1N1 flu have died, and a large number of employees have had serious illnesses affect their families. This has impacted the workforce's ability to focus on their work, instead being concerned about their families, their friends' families, and their deceased co-workers.

EXERCISE DISCUSSION

The goal of the exercise is to have a general discussion to explore how the H1N1 threat is being handled in your company.

Employee Fear and Anxiety

- **TOPIC AREA: Administrative – Training and Education**
 - The developments in the world have created a high level of fear and anxiety among employees.
 - Employees are expressing anxiety about the flu.
 - Every time someone sneezes or coughs, the entire room jumps.
 - Employees are asking their managers what the company will do if things worsen.
- **Moderated questions:**
 1. How will your company educate employees on the company plans?
 2. Is there employee education on the flu to separate fact from fiction?
 3. Who in the company is addressing employee concerns?
 4. How will these concerns be addressed? When?
 5. Is there a general awareness of the importance of cough and sneeze etiquette?
 6. What other things will your company consider doing to calm employees?

Employee Distancing in the Workplace

- **TOPIC AREA: Administrative – Social Distancing**
 - Employees may have heard from the media that the flu can jump between people who are closer than 6 feet apart. They are worried that their workspaces are closer than that, or that people will pass closer than 6 feet in the corridors.
 - Other employees may have expressed serious concerns about low-walled cubicles and common high-use areas such as break rooms or the cafeteria.
- **Moderated questions:**
 1. How is your company addressing the issue of safe social distancing in the workplace while ensuring that productivity won't be dramatically impacted?
 2. For workspaces that are grouped closer than 6 feet apart, how will you keep employees safe? If you have call centers or dispatch centers, how will you keep those employees safe?
 3. How will common areas, such as the cafeteria, be managed?
 4. If employees share vehicles, how will they stay safe?
 5. How will customer contact change in order to maintain proper distance?
 6. How will meetings be conducted to maintain proper distancing? Will all meetings become virtual? Most? Many? Some?
 7. What type of protective equipment, if any, do you plan to use? What do you

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- actually have on hand (i.e., already purchased)?
8. In a high-rise building, how will employees use the elevator to remain safe?

Government Guidance

- **TOPIC AREA: Guidance from Federal, State and Local Authorities**
 - Events are developing rapidly in this fast-moving situation. Government guidance will be varied as the circumstances evolved.
 - Think of your type of business – what do you need to know from the government entities in order to continue to operate?
- **Moderated questions:**
 1. What type of guidance do you feel you need from the Federal, State and/or Local government entities?
 2. Given the situation, what type of recommended actions and counter-measures would you like to get from the government?
 3. What kind of support do you feel you need from the government to stay in operation?

Training

- **TOPIC AREA: Just-in-time Training**
 - New information is continuously emerging from the CDC and other government agencies on the evolving pandemic.
 - Recommendations on PPE and antiviral medication dosing have changed several times over the past several months.
 - Your employees are gathering information from many sources, some reliable, some unreliable.
- **Moderated questions:**
 1. How are you providing just-in-time training to your employees when new recommendations emerge?
 2. How are you disseminating new information to employees across your company including those onsite, those working from home and those on furlough?
 3. Who is crafting employee messages and who is responsible to address the concerns of the employees?
 4. How are you addressing the concerns of the security staff about their own safety?
 5. How are you protecting your facilities in the face of the circulating rumors?
 6. How are you handling internet and telephone problems that prevent workers at home?

Employee Support

- **TOPIC AREA: Emotional Support**
 - Everyone in your company has a family member that is sick or has died or knows someone who is sick or has died.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- Some employees are not coping well with the stress of the pandemic and seem at their wits' end. Others are depressed and lethargic.
- **Moderated questions:**
 1. Does your employee assistance program have the capability to greatly increase their telephone counseling services? Does the EAP program have the technology in place?
 2. Are there plans in place to augment their counseling staff to handle the increased need during a pandemic?
 3. How will you support your employees if your EAP program is unavailable?

Continuity of Operations

- **TOPIC AREA: Leadership Succession Planning**
 - Several of your top leaders are too sick to function in their roles at work.
 - There are rumors that your CEO may have died of the flu.
 - Employees are concerned about how the company will survive if all the leaders are sick or dead.
- **Moderated Questions:**
 1. What is the “command and control” structure that you have in place to manage this emergency? Will it be “physical” or “virtual”?
 2. What is the succession plan for your company’s leadership?
 3. What plans are in place if there is an insufficient number of board members available to conduct company business?
 4. What is your responsibility to your shareholders if there is a big leadership change?
 5. Who has the authority to make critical decisions or sign documents if senior leadership is unavailable?

Facilities Operations

- **TOPIC AREA: Workplace Cleaning**
 - Many employees who share common equipment are resistant to using someone else’s phone or keyboard and are demanding their own equipment.
 - Employees sharing vehicles, control panels or working in small spaces are expressing anxiety about cleaning protocols and being near other workers and customers.
 - Employees are bringing in all sorts of cleaning supplies to keep their areas clean.
 - You have received reports that many desktops and countertops have been severely damaged by inappropriate cleaning solution being used on them.
 - In one area, several employees had a severe reaction to a “super” cleaning solution created by a co-worker containing bleach and ammonia mixed together.
 - Your normal cleaning company is experiencing a 40% absenteeism rate and cannot meet even your routine cleaning requirements.

Kentuckiana Contingency Planners (KCP)

- **Moderated questions:**

1. How are you promoting safe cleaning of workspaces with the correct solutions?
2. What strategies are you using to keep common areas like kitchens, break rooms, and bathrooms clean and usable?
3. How are you promoting that your work environment is a safe one so that employees will feel safe to come to work?
4. What strategy are you using to achieve increased cleaning of your workspaces (especially high-touch surfaces) required by the pandemic, given that your cleaning service cannot meet your basic needs?
5. Are you expecting employees to clean their own spaces? If so, are you providing cleaning solutions and training?
6. Are you providing hand sanitizers for all employees?
7. What are your protocols for maintaining HVAC equipment? How often are you changing filters? What is your air-exchange ratio (fresh to recycled air)?