

Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan (PPRP)

CODE	P-XXX	VERSION	3.0
REVIEWER	W. BAJARS	REVIEWED DATE	12/03/2020
POSITION	SENIOR HSE ADVISOR		
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POSITION	GM OPERATIONS		

REVISION HISTORY

REV	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	REVIEWED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVED DATE
1.0	Initial	W. Bajars	P. Skuse	31/01/2020
2.0	Updated to include COVID-19	W. Bajars	P. Skuse	28/02/2020
3.0	Revised Action Plans	W. Bajars	P. Skuse	13/03/2020

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INTRODUCTION

A pandemic is described by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a new disease that spreads over the whole world. A pandemic is sometimes confused with an epidemic, but there are clear differences between the two i.e. an epidemic is defined by a large number of cases of a particular disease appearing at the same time in a particular location.

For the purposes of this document, pandemic will be used throughout to describe how ERGT would respond to (any) contagious disease outbreak that has, or may impact ERGT employees, contractors, clients or the general public where ERGT staff undertake their work activities. Depending on the scale of outbreak, ERGT may activate all, or just components of this plan.

Pandemics are rare, but when identified it is likely that easy access to social and mainstream media will cause confusion and uncertainty within communities. Therefore, ERGT seeks guidance from the most credible sources of pandemic (fact) to both prepare for and manage events should they occur. These are:

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) – Pandemic Influenza Risk Management Plan 2017
- Australian Commonwealth Government - Australian Health Management Plan for Influenza 2019
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – Smart Traveller website
- Western Australian Government, Department of Health – Infectious Disease Emergency Management Plan 2017
- ERGT Occupational Health Advisor

When credible sources discuss pandemics they are typically referring to a rare strain of influenza virus, or a virus known for its higher mortality rate: Ebola, HIV, Smallpox, Rabies etc. However, in the last hundred years there have been a number of rare stains of influenza (flu) that have had significant impacts:

- 1918 – Spanish flu killed an estimated 50 million globally
- 1957 – Asian flu killed an estimated 2 million globally
- 1968 – Hong Kong flu killed an estimated 1 million globally

By way of comparison the Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak of 2002 killed an estimated 750,000, the H1N1 Swine Flu outbreak of 2009 killed 575,000, and the H5N1 Bird Flu of 2009 killed just 100 globally. Moreover, each year the common flu kills between 250,000 and 500,000 globally.

Due to the relative ease at which flu can be spread between people: coughing, sneezing, talking in close proximity with, or touching a contaminated surface, it is important to undertake precautionary measures each flu season. Moreover, when a rare strain of flu or other contagious disease is identified with pandemic potential, risk increases significantly as the true extent of the outbreak may take months to verify. Therefore, governments will activate health plans to both prepare for escalation and to manage the direct impact of any pandemic.

Activating health plans sets in motion a range of preventative and direct action strategies developed by the collective expertise of national (and global) scientists. In extreme situations, preventative measures may result in travel restrictions and limitations to social and business interaction, which in turn impacts the economy. Therefore, like governments, ERGT has produced a Pandemic Preparedness & Response Plan to be utilised when either significant risk is identified, or a pandemic is confirmed.

1.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This plan provides a framework for ERGT to manage the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) phases of a pandemic to minimise impact on people and disruption to the business. It is based on international and national recommended processes that are detailed within the international and national pandemic plans listed in section-one.

To meet the challenges associated with maintaining ERGT operations during a pandemic event, each ERGT training centre manager is responsible for production and upkeep of localised operational plans to achieve the objectives of this plan.

Due to the uncertainty of future pandemic virus strains, this plan does not provide any detailed medical strategy to care for impacted persons. However, this plan does direct management and staff how to source specific medical guidance so that ERGT can maximise care during response to any pandemic.

1.2. PPRR

ERGT utilises the national PPRR strategy for all crisis and emergency management planning. In the context of this plan, PPRR definitions are as follows:

- **Prevention:** government aligned processes to prevent the spread of any pandemic, including localised tactics for monitoring employees, staff, contractors and clients; plus internal and external reporting procedures.
- **Preparedness:** monitoring authoritative sources to ensure ERGT plans remain relevant, conducting workshops and exercises to test components of the pandemic plan, periodically briefing staff on the pandemic plan and any changes to it.
- **Response:** executing the plan, or just components of it, in response to verification of a threat or actual pandemic confirmation.
- **Recovery:** returning to pre-pandemic status in terms of impacts to employees and the business.

1.3. Plan Objectives

The ERGT Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan has the following objectives:

- Protect ERGT workers and clients (students), from unnecessary exposure to pandemic illness;
- Support ERGT employees who are directly or indirectly affected by pandemic illness;
- Ensure alignment of ERGT preparedness arrangements with Australian and International pandemic management plans, as well as those arrangements of major ERGT clients;
- Provide a management framework to ensure ongoing assessment of regional pandemic risks to ERGT operations is undertaken;
- Ensure mitigation measures are available to be implemented when required; and
- Generate awareness to the considerable business continuity challenges associated with a pandemic event.
- Ensure alignment of knowledge and practices with those of major ERGT clients, to effectively manage risks related to any virus and to provide confidence for major clients to continue sending their people for training at ERGT centres.

1.4. Relationship with Other ERGT Plans

This Plan document should interface with the following:

- Business Continuity Plan
- Incident Management Plan
- HSE Management System
- ERGT Management System

With the anticipated impact on the ability of staff and contractors to perform their duties due to illness, the potential Business Continuity implications associated with a pandemic are significant.

1.5. Plan Owner

The ERGT HSE Advisor is responsible for the ongoing development, review and maintenance of this plan.

1.6. Plan Exercising / Awareness / Assurance

Elements of this plan should be subject to exercise to ascertain preparedness levels. Exercise activities are to be considered when there is evidence of escalating virus activity at Pandemic Phase – Standby, particularly in locations near an ERGT operating location.

1.7. Structure of This Document

This PPRP contains 13 sections.

Section	Contents
1	Introduction to the plan including plan objectives.
2	Overview of ERGT facilities and medical management.
3	Key responsibilities of ERGT personnel in the operation of this plan.
4	Pandemic planning framework based around International, National and State/Territory pandemic plans, and including community graduated pandemic planning and alignment to ERGT pandemic planning phases.
5	Summary of key actions that ERGT will implement at each ERGT pandemic phase.
6	Overview of Pandemics
7	How individuals can minimize the risk of exposure to a pandemic virus. Includes general self-care guidelines.
8	Processes associated with diagnosis, treatment and management of ill persons.
9	The need for hygiene, cleaning and infection control to restrict transmission of pandemic virus in the workplace. Refers to ERGT Pandemic Hygiene Plan and Procedures. Appendix B
10	Overview of the business continuity challenges associated with a pandemic and actions required to maintain ongoing business during a pandemic.
11	The human resource management processes associated with managing pandemic preparedness and response. Includes employee welfare and support measures.
12	How travel will be managed during a pandemic alert and response.
13	Communications measures to ensure employee communication can be maintained in a pandemic situation.
	Appendix Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Action Plans relating to each ERGT Pandemic Stage- Hygiene Plan- Self Declaration Questionnaire- Government contact details including medical treatment facilities- History of Pandemics

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