Epidemic/Pandemic Policy

*Last updated November 2021*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved by Board on | [insert date] |
| Responsible person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Introduction

* 1. From time to time, infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics, and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the particular disease in question and general efforts at preparedness.
	2. [Organisation] wishes as far as possible to protect its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.
	3. [Organisation] will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public, consistent with occupational/work health and safety obligations.
	4. [Organisation] will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.
	5. This policy falls within the field of operation of [Organisation]’s overall Risk Management Processes and is thus under the general supervision of the organisation’s [risk management officer/Risk Management Committee].

### Purpose

* 1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that [Organisation] intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.
	2. This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers at [Organisation], including all personnel affiliated with third parties.
	3. This policy & procedure is not intended to override any industrial instrument, contract, award or legislation, including:
* *Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)*
* *Fair Work Act 2009* *(Commonwealth)*
* *Fair Work Regulations 2009* *(Commonwealth)*
* [Applicable industrial instrument]

### Definitions

* 1. **For the purpose of this policy, infectious diseases** mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on **infectious diseases** that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.
	2. For the purpose of this policy, employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers will be referredto as **‘staff’** or **‘staff members’**.

### Policy

* 1. [Organisation] will as far as possible plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.
	2. In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, [Organisation] will, as far as possible:
* Assist its clients, staff and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
* Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis and to seek treatment, where appropriate.
* Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
* Provide personal protective equipment to employees, volunteers, contractors and clients, where appropriate.
* Require employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
* Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.
	1. In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, [Organisation] requires people covered by this Policy to:
* take all precautions required by the appropriate authorities.
* take any additional precautions mandated by the board after considering appropriate medical advice.
	1. In carrying out the procedures listed below, [Name of Organisation] will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities and the World Health Organisation, and its occupational health and safety obligations.

#### Leave and Flexibility

* 1. [Organisation] recognises that employees may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others. [Organisation] recognises that volunteers may request or require an absence when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others.
	2. Workers may make use of leave consistent with [Organisation]’s leave policy, relevant industrial instruments, and the National Employment Standards, including access to unpaid leave.
	3. [Organisation] may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely.

### Above and beyond provisions

#### Below is a list of provisions that go beyond the minimum and thus may help your organisation move into “Employer of Choice” territory. Consider if any of these might be appropriate for your organisation. Delete or include these provisions as appropriate for your organisation.

* 1. [Organisation] [will/may] subsidise any reasonable medical expenses incurred by any employees directed by [Organisation] to obtain medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work.
	2. [Organisation] [will/may, at its discretion] offer any employee who is diagnosed with the infectious disease in question additional paid [Epidemic Leave/Leave] entitlements to cover any period the person is required to spend in quarantine or self-quarantine, presuming that person cannot carry out their duties remotely.
	3. Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, [Organisation] will aim to provide employee with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments.

## Epidemic/Pandemic Procedures

*Last updated November 2021*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Procedure number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved on | [insert date] |
| Authorised person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Responsibilities

* 1. The **CEO** is responsible for:
* Nominating the Epidemic Officer. The normal expectation will be that the workplace health and safety officer shall be appointed as Epidemic Officer, but the CEO may choose an alternative appointee.
* Ensuring that the organisation’s Leave Policy and Workplace Health and Safety Policy are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic Policy
* Assessing the [Organisation]’s vulnerabilities and risks, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
	+ [Organisation]’s own human resources
	+ [Organisation]’s suppliers of goods and services
	+ [Organisation]’s clients and customers
	+ In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
		- giving notice to staff, clients, and any persons likely to be affected that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect
		- bringing into operation the epidemic or pandemic management procedures specified below
		- instituting any administrative measures necessary to reduce the impact of the vulnerabilities detailed above

1.2 **Supervisors/managers** are responsible for:

* Ensuring that staff are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.

1.3 **Staff members** are responsible for:

* Abiding by the epidemic procedures specified below, when informed by authorised staff that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect

1.4 The **epidemic officer** is responsible for:

* Working with the CEO on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan
* Advising the CEO on when epidemic procedures should be activated
* Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance
* Working with all sectors of the organisation to identify mission-critical staff and functions

see Template #3, “Identification of Mission Critical Functions” from [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](https://www.tisn.gov.au/documents/template%2Bfor%2Bpandemic%2Bplan.pdf)

### Processes

* 1. The following procedures apply in the event of the CEO giving notice that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect.

#### Events

* 1. The CEO, with the advice of the epidemic officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether any events involving the attendance of staff or members of the public should be changed, rescheduled or cancelled to minimise the risk of infection.

#### Work procedures

* 1. The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer,
* will issue appropriate instructions to ensure all government directives dealing with epidemic practices are put into effect.
* will in addition consider on a continuing basis whether:
	+ it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff to work from home.
	+ staff travel, (or engage in other activities that may cause them to come into contact with other people in Australia or overseas) should be modified or terminated.
	+ arrangements for staff who work with clients or the public should be modified to minimise risks for all parties.
* may require any member of staff to not attend the workplace, and/or to work from home, or, if this is not feasible or appropriate, to take [paid Epidemic Leave / Personal Leave/ Annual Leave] or an absence.
* may require any or all staff to be appropriately vaccinated if this is necessary to protect other employees, clients, or members of the public.
* may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.

#### Vaccinations

* 1. The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider whether the best medical advice supports requiring employees to provide information that they have received appropriate vaccinations.
	2. The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider whether relevant direction or orders applying to the staff or the workplace requires employees to receive appropriate vaccinations.
	3. [Organisation] will consult with staff regarding the circumstances and scope of any such requirement.
	4. [Organisation] will wherever feasible allow appropriate medical exemptions to any such requirement.
	5. [Organisation] will treat all information about a staff member's vaccination as confidential and only shared on a need to know basis.
	6. The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider whether the protection of staff, clients, and contractors from infection may require that restrictions be placed on unvaccinated persons accessing the premises.

#### Contractors and suppliers

* 1. The CEO, with the advice of the epidemic officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether arrangements with existing contractors and suppliers need to be modified or supplemented to ensure uninterrupted service delivery

#### Health Messaging

* 1. The epidemic officer shall familiarise staff and others, as relevant, with recommended procedures on epidemic avoidance guidelines (e.g. handwashing, soap, etc) as appropriate.

### Related Documents

* 1. Relevant policies
* [Risk Management Policy](https://communitydirectors.com.au/policies/risk-management-policy)
* [Workplace Health & Safety Policy](https://communitydirectors.com.au/policies/workplace-health-and-safety-policy)
* [Personal Leave, Carer's Leave & Compassionate Leave](https://communitydirectors.com.au/policies/personal-leave-carers-leave-compassionate-leave)
* [Unpaid Leave Policy](https://communitydirectors.com.au/policies/unpaid-leave-policy)
* Flexible Work Policy
	1. Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza ([AHMPPI](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-ahmppi.htm))
	+ [ACT - Australian Capital Territory](https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/winter-wellbeing-and-flu)
	+ [NSW - New South Wales](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pandemic/Pages/default.aspx)
	+ [NT - Northern Territory](https://health.nt.gov.au/health-governance/department-of-health/health-disaster-management/pandemics)
	+ [Qld - Queensland](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/diseases/influenza/pandemic)
	+ [SA - South Australia](https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public%20content/sa%20health%20internet/protecting%20public%20health/emergency%20management/pandemic%20influenza%20arrangement)
	+ [Tas - Tasmania](http://flu.tas.gov.au/about_influenza/tasmanian_health_action_plan_for_pandemic_influenza)
	+ [Vic - Victoria](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/emergencies/emergency-type/infectious-diseases/pandemic-influenza)
	+ [WA - Western Australia](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Emergency-management-in-WA)
	1. CovidSafe Plan
* [ACT – Australian Capital Territory](https://www.act.gov.au/business/keeping-your-business-covid-safe/covid-safety-plan)
* [NSW – New South Wales](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/safety-plans?gclid=CjwKCAjw_L6LBhBbEiwA4c46uq8Cf6wZoG8P8znRJAPZX6-o47K-W3ZIGolEuXmq1O5AbxvOrthHqRoCmGQQAvD_BwE&utm_campaign=covid19-business-phase1&utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google)
* [NT- Northern Territory](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/business-and-work/business)
* [Qld – Queensland](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses)
* [SA – South Australia](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/business-and-events/create-a-covid-safe-plan)
* [Tas – Tasmania](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/business-and-employees/covid-19-safe-workplaces-framework)
* [Vic – Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan)
* [WA – Western Australia](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/covid-19-coronavirus-covid-safety-plans-and-guidelines)
	1. Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for Critical Infrastructure Resilience: [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](https://www.tisn.gov.au/documents/template%2Bfor%2Bpandemic%2Bplan.pdf)

About this document

This policy sample has been developed by the [Institute of Community Directors Australia](https://www.communitydirectors.com.au?utm_campaign=policybank&utm_medium=doc&utm_source=website&utm_content=template) (ICDA), in conjunction with [Maddocks](https://www.maddocks.com.au/), and is free for any not-for-profit organisation to download and use, so long as it is for a non-commercial purpose and that the organisation is not paying a consultant to carry out this work. [See here](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general_article.jsp?articleId=2153#16) for our full copyright guidelines.

### Important notes

You should not rely on these sample policies and procedures alone. They are a starting point only. You need to adapt the sample policies and procedures to suit your own language and the specific requirements of your organisation.

Most samples include both policies and procedures. The policies are designed to provide guidance on standards, while the procedures give instructions on implementing the standards. We recommend adopting policies at a board level, while procedures can be developed and signed off by the organisation's CEO.

We use the term ‘Board’ to cover boards, committees of management, or anybody that has final authority in your organisation. The term ‘CEO’ extends to executive directors, or your chief administrator. You should change the terms in these policies to match the terms used by your organisation.

### Other policies

There are a number of policies available on the [Community Directors website](https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank). You can search for what you need with our site search function.

### Make a deposit into our Policy Bank

If you have some policies that your organisation believes would be of benefit to other groups, email them to service@ourcommunity.com.au. We will review them, amend them so that they are applicable to the greatest number of not-for-profit organisations as possible, update them into our format, and upload them to our Policy Bank as an easily accessible resource.

### Join us!

ICDA is a best-practice governance network for the directors serving on Australia’s 600,000 not-for-profit boards, committees and councils, and the senior Workers who support them. ICDA members get access to a range of educational, capacity building and networking opportunities that build knowledge, connections and credentials.

If you appreciated this free policy, we would appreciate your ongoing support by joining ICDA from only $65 per year.

### The benefits of membership

1. Receive ‘responsible person’ status – ICDA members are recognised by the ATO under ‘responsible person’ rules, provided (among other things) that the member is not:
	1. a founder of the organisation;
	2. a donor to the organisation who has contributed more than $10,000; or
	3. an associate of a founder or a donor who has contributed more than $10,000 to the organisation.
2. Recognition – three membership post-nominal options, providing community and professional recognition for educated and engaged not-for-profit members;
3. Capacity building publications – including current trends, issues and emerging areas of risk via newsletters and governance help sheets;
4. Policy alerts – receive notification when changes are made to governance, human resources, financial management, values and communication policies which have previously been downloaded through the Policy Bank;
5. Preferential member pricing – members receive discounts for the Festival of Community Directors events and online Compact Courses;
6. Alumni events – access to deep connections and a vibrant network of believers and doers. There is an online forum, as well as regular invitations to events such as the Communities in Control Conference;
7. Access to forums, networks, information and opportunities – boost your confidence (and competence) and open career doors; and
8. Budget-friendly – for as little as $65 a year you get all the benefits outlined above and so much more.

### Legal advice at a pre-agreed price

Please note that this is a template policy for guidance only. For assistance in tailoring this policy to suit your organisation, or for legal advice at a pre-agreed price or training in this area, please do not hesitate to contact Our Community’s preferred legal supplier [Maddocks](https://maddocks.com.au).

E: NFPHelp@maddocks.com.au | W: <https://maddocks.com.au>