



NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative Table-Top Exercise

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

Preparing for the exercise:

1. Invite everyone who has responsibility for providing access, services and/or resources to your patrons. Emphasize that their attendance and participation is essential.
2. Arrange for someone to take notes at the meeting, documenting any issues that arise and listing anything that needs to be worked out.
3. Prepare slips of paper that are labeled “sick” or “not sick,” one for each person who will be attending the exercise.
4. According to this exercise, 30% of the library’s staff are out sick, so try and prepare the slips of paper so that this proportion works out in your group; e.g. if you will have 12 people at your meeting, then have 4 “sick” slips and 8 “not sick” slips.

Scenario #1:

Your institution has not closed the libraries yet, although the influenza virus is spreading rapidly within your community. However, library staff are calling in sick, either because they themselves are ill, they are caring for family members who are ill, or they are “self-quarantined” in order to protect themselves and their families from becoming ill. At this point, about 30% of your staff are unavailable.

Conducting the exercise:

1. Review the scenario above
2. Have everyone draw a slip of paper and announce whether they are sick or not sick
3. Moderate a discussion to determine which library services and resources need to be maintained in this scenario (or use your completed PReP for Service Continuity, which will specify these resources based on previous determination).
4. Determine how these core services and resources will be maintained from off-site if your library is open but some of your staff are sick.

Scenario #2:

Due to the recent outbreak of influenza in your community, the administration of your institution is requiring all non-essential “social” sites where students congregate to close immediately for one week. These sites include all student centers and libraries. None of the faculty or staff working in these areas should report to work during this time. All classes will be conducted “online only,” until further notice. Patient care areas, cafeterias, and research facilities will remain

open. Any student, employee, or faculty member experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay home!

Steps for the Facilitator in conducting the exercise:

1. Review the scenario.
2. Moderate a discussion to determine which library services and resources need to be maintained in this scenario (or use your completed PReP for Service Continuity, which will specify these resources based on previous determination).
3. Determine how these core services and resources will be maintained from off-site when your library is closed and certain staff are sick.

Questions for Discussion

Following are questions that may help guide the discussion. Adapt them to your own situation, or add your own questions as needed:

1. If the library remains open while some of your staff are unavailable because of illness, which staff positions are considered essential and would require training a back-up or having written instructions about how to carry out an essential function?
2. If the library is closed or its hours are changed due to an emergency, how do you inform your patrons and your staff? Do you have the ability to make announcements on your library's website from off-site if the library building is closed?
3. Are there any events scheduled during the time the library will be closed that you might need to cancel? How will you contact participants?
4. Who is designated to communicate information on your social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter?
5. Will someone monitor your Ask a Librarian chat from home if need be?
6. If necessary, is there another library that you could partner with that could help you continue providing essential services or resources?
7. Are there any work-place policies that you need to consider? For example, are staff permitted to work from home if the library is closed?