



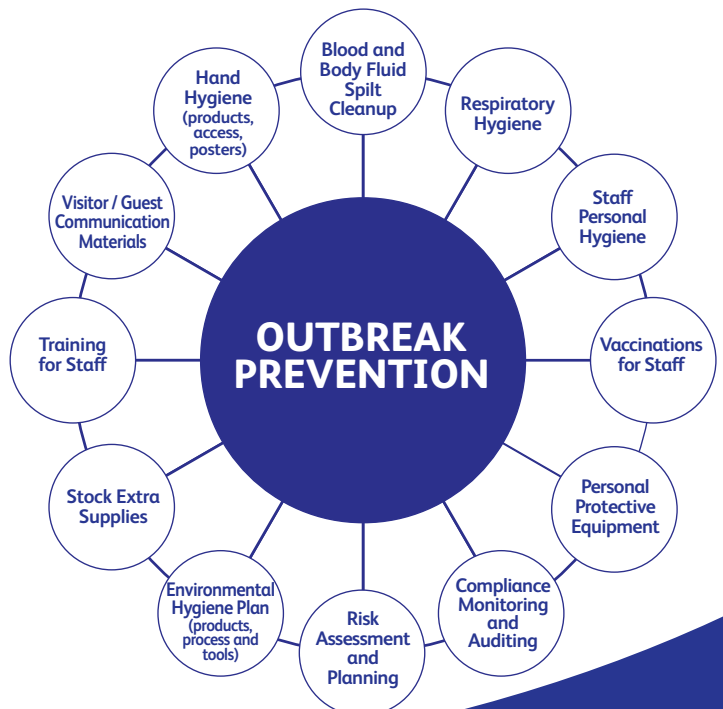
# Outbreak Prevention Best Practices for Public Facilities

## Introduction

The risk of pathogens infecting the general public is an ever present and serious risk for all public facilities, and preventing the transmission of disease is an ongoing part of a facility's risk management practice. The risk of transmission of pathogens resulting in infection may be significantly lower in a non-healthcare facility versus a healthcare environment, but the limited formal investigation (i.e. well-designed studies published in peer reviewed journals), makes quantification of the risk difficult for public facilities, which has an impact on the resources allocated for infection prevention.

In the event of an outbreak/epidemic, healthcare facilities are well prepared to deal with the disease and do not generally have to change their practices. Even in a pandemic outbreak, healthcare will have the policies in place to deal with the increase in illness. However, for non-healthcare facilities, since infection prevention isn't as strong a concern on a consistent basis, they may lack the knowledge and resources to determine the implications for their facility in the event of an outbreak/epidemic, pandemic, or new pathogen of concern.

This document was developed to assist non-healthcare public facilities in assessing their environmental infection prevention preparedness for an outbreak. While it does not cover all elements of an outbreak plan that could potentially be relevant, such as interruption of power, drinking water, food, sewer, and trash pickup, or labor issues, such as not having enough healthy staff to operate, these considerations may prevent the facility from operating, whereas the recommendations in this guide are designed to look specifically at environmental infection issues assuming the facility can otherwise be operational.



# Assessing outbreak preparedness

## A. Risk Assessment/Planning

The best infection prevention programs are developed before a time of crisis. Having a team that meets regularly and is empowered to make decisions for the facility is critical in identifying potential gaps in how the facility would respond to specific challenges. After a facility risk assessment, the team should make recommendations, which may include modifications to facilities, such as adding handwashing stations, or additional storage for infection prevention supplies which may be needed. These modifications take time, thus the need to plan before an outbreak. The recommendations may also include having an extra supply of disinfectants, disinfectant wipes, hand hygiene products, facial tissues, toilet paper, and extra trash cans and liners to be used for outbreaks.

## B. Environmental Hygiene Plan (products, process, and tools)

Since clean hands that touch dirty surfaces negates the value of hand hygiene, having and using regularly a proper range of disinfectants, cleaners, and cleaning tools (cleaning cloths, spray bottles, etc.) is an important part of daily operation and preparation for an outbreak. In the event of an outbreak or a new pathogen of concern, it may be necessary to change cleaning products or increase the amount of cleaning being performed. The cleaning process can be assessed to determine whether key surfaces are identified and how they are to be cleaned. Required cleaning tools should be identified so that they are available when needed.

## C. Stock Extra Supplies

When an outbreak occurs or there is a new pathogen of concern, knowing in advance what supplies will be needed and what the lead time is will help the facility be prepared. This can include additional supplies of disinfectants, cleaners, hand hygiene products, disposable wipers, paper towels, trash bags, toilet paper, extra garbage pickups, bottled water, gloves, gowns, masks, etc. The planning process should identify what is expected to be needed and how much additional to order.

## D. Training for Staff

Staff will need training in a number of areas including proper cleaning and disinfection processes, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and blood and body fluid cleanup. Preparation and training in advance minimizes the disruption during time of an outbreak.

## E. Visitor/Guest Communication Materials

If a facility wants their customers/guests to perform certain behaviors, such as using alcohol hand gels, having prepared signs, door hangers, table tents, and other communication materials are helpful in gaining compliance and having a professional appearance to the materials.

## F. Hand Hygiene

The simplest, most cost effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens is by frequent hand hygiene. Studies done in Healthcare demonstrate that access to hand hygiene is the best predictor of whether people will perform it frequently. Ensure that the hand hygiene products (if antimicrobial) have an acceptable level of efficacy against pathogens of concern and that they are conveniently located within the facility for staff and visitors/guests to use. Appropriate signage can also help increase hand hygiene compliance.

## G. Blood and Body Fluid Cleanup

One of the most likely routes of exposure to pathogens for staff is when cleaning up a blood or body fluid spill from a visitor/guest. Staff should be trained in the correct procedure and the proper usage of PPE.

## H. Respiratory Hygiene

Staff and visitors/guests routinely infect others through improper respiratory hygiene. We recommend displaying signs encouraging staff and visitors to cover coughing and sneezing by using their elbow (not their hand). We advise using tissues, disposing of them after a single use, and performing hand hygiene after using a tissue.

## I. Staff Personal Hygiene

Staff should be coached to bathe daily, wear clean uniforms each day, perform hand hygiene frequently, keep vaccinations current, and other behaviors that improve the hygiene of the facility. Many of these practices can be embedded in Human Resources policies.

## J. Vaccinations

Where possible, providing and/or requiring employee vaccinations helps protect the staff and prevent transmission of pathogens to guests/customers. Healthcare facilities in many countries are moving in the direction of requiring their employees to have annual influenza vaccinations. We encourage this in other sectors as well where practical to reduce the risk of illness for the staff and reduce the risk of staff getting infected from customers/guests.

## K. Personal Protective Equipment

Workers may need gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection depending on the pathogens of concern. As with other elements of the facility plan, this should be considered in advance so that there are no questions around the use of the PPE. Workers will need training in how to use the PPE including correctly donning and taking off the PPE and doing hand hygiene before and after use of the PPE.

## L. Compliance Monitoring and Auditing

Many Healthcare facilities have programs to monitor hand hygiene, surface cleaning, and PPE usage compliance. In this way, they hold themselves accountable not just for having the policies, but for following them as well. Even in non-Healthcare facilities it may be appropriate to consider the use of compliance monitoring and routine auditing to ensure workers are performing as expected.

**Summary:** When outbreaks occur, time is at a premium. Planning done in advance can simplify the process of responding to an outbreak and reduce risk to an acceptable level. If you have any questions about this document, please contact Diversey's customer service team.