

Version: 20200321

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN CHECKLIST – PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS FOR LICENSED POST OFFICES*

March 2020

Note: A ‘pandemic’ is an epidemic on a global scale. Even a mild pandemic or a severe epidemic is likely to have a significant impact on the health sector and the community.

Licensed post offices must be prepared for pandemics in three ways:

1. As an essential service, community service provider and part of the community assisting people in accordance with recommended pandemic management actions
2. Having arrangements in place to maintain business operations of the licensed post office to ensure continued access and support for the community
3. Having alternative arrangements in place should the post office no longer be able to open to ensure continued access of community to postal services

* modified from Australian Pharmacy Guild Doc v20200313

TO CONSIDER

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Identify sources for reliable information, resources and pandemic updates

- Commonwealth Department of Health
- State and Territory Health Departments
- Australia Post website <http://auspost.com.au>

Are you aware of the State/Territory pandemic plan and how this may impact on postal services?

- Post offices provide lesser essential services to maintain the functioning of civil society
- Licensed Post offices will continue where safe to support the continued functioning of civil society and maintain government services

Will you be able to maintain products and services?

- Transport of supplies may be impacted by quarantine provisions and disruption to the supplier’s own business.
- Wholesaler ordering arrangements may change:
 - o Delivery schedules may be delayed
 - o Order limits may apply to mitigate against national shortages

Will you provide PPE for staff?

- Determine the clinical and/or Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirements for provision of appropriate PPE for staff use under the guidance provided by government or other relevant agencies.
- Determine how you source PPE (Government may recognise post offices as an essential service and supply PPE).
- Ensure staff know how to use and dispose of PPE.

Where a vaccine is available, promote uptake, including for staff and vulnerable patients (e.g. seasonal influenza vaccination).

- Consider vaccinating staff.
- Determine how to communicate with the local community.

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Determine which staff will need to be involved in the various operations?

The post office may change routine operations and staff roles to accommodate pandemic-specific activities according to how the pandemic evolves.

Determine, for example, if:

- Specific arrangements need to be put in place if a staff member is considered to be in a high-risk patient group.
- Specific staff may be directed to managing customer and delivery entry to the post office.
- Specific staff may be directed to routinely disinfect surfaces at regular intervals

Determine what services will be continued and what will be suspended.

- Identify core business activities, staffing and skills.
- Determine if you need to alter your operating hours, and if so, how this will be communicated.
- Determine what non-essential services will you suspend or cease.
- Determine any changes to how essential services are managed
- Ensure you have contingency plans for essential services if these cannot be maintained.

How will you manage people in the post office?

Measures to minimise transmission of the virus may be required including restriction on customer numbers or customer movement around the post office.

In addition, if post office staffing levels are affected, there may be a limit on how many customers can enter the post office at a time to manage security and enable reasonable attend to customer needs and to further minimise transmission.

- Decide if there are any changes for how customers and suppliers will enter, move through and leave the post office during a pandemic.
- Determine any limits in the number of customers in the premises at any one time to minimise spread and assist with post office security.
- Determine if there is a need to avoid handling cash and operating only on accounts or card transactions.

How will you manage patients experiencing symptoms?

People may present to or call the post office with symptoms and seeking services or advice.

- Determine arrangements for staff protection, such as:
 - o Signage at entrance redirecting symptomatic patients before they enter, or calling rather than entering premise
 - o Use of PPE for workers, customers and suppliers
 - o Decontamination after customer attending
- Determine what information is provided to people that call the post office for advice.

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Identify when you will choose to close and what alternative arrangements need to be made?

- Determine your trigger for suspending operation of the post office (e.g. minimum staffing levels, stock delivery interruptions).
- Confirm contingency arrangements for postal services and customers services.
- Alternative post offices available for postal service.
- Identify signage directing customers to other support.
- Identify security measures while the post office is closed.
- Confirm staff and wage arrangements while the post office is closed.
- Determine how staff, patients and other providers will be alerted when post office is re-opening.