Facilitators Guide to:

Preparing for a Pandemic Flu: What First Responders Need to Know

A shift-based training program

Overview
Many health experts believe that the next outbreak of a pandemic flu isn’t a question of if, but when. This training program is for first responders who play a vital role in outbreak response. It is crucial that rank and file fire fighters learn basic information about the pandemic flu to protect themselves, their families, their coworkers and their community.

This program provides hands-on activities and discussion questions to teach first responders to prepare for a major emergency, such as a pandemic flu outbreak or environmental disaster.

Learning Objectives
After completing this program, first responders will be able to:
• Predict and summarize the effects of a pandemic flu on the individual, family, the department, the community and nation
• Identify proper personal protective equipment and when to don it
• Create a personal family plan for a major response and implement it

Recommended Participants
• Rank and file fire fighters, EMT and other first responders
• Members of the same crew

Recommended Facilitator
• Training Coordinators/Officers
• Infection Control personnel
• Safety Officers

Agenda
This program is divided into three lessons, which could be completed in one workshop or individually, based on time.

Module 1: In My Fire House (30 minutes)
Examine the bigger picture of how their job and first responders are affected

Module 2: Making a Plan (1 hour)
Participants break into pairs or small groups to create a plan for their families

Module 3: Protecting Myself (30 minutes)
Remembering what PPE to wear and when to don it is addressed in this hands-on activity
Module 1: In My Fire House  (Recommended time 30 minutes)

Summary
This lesson focuses on understanding factors behind the bigger picture by answering the question: What will the affects of a pandemic flu outbreak be?

Learning objectives
• Predict and summarize effects of a pandemic flu on the individual, family, the department, the community and nation
• Recognize the chain reaction of events in the case of a pandemic flu

Materials needed
• White board, chalk board, easel w/ pad or white paper taped to wall
• Markers

Facilitator Instructions

1. Guided Discussion on the Pandemic Flu (10 minutes)
To understand bigger picture of a pandemic flu outbreak, start with basic facts about the pandemic flu. Ask participants: What do you already know about the pandemic flu?

*Facilitator’s note: Italicized and bold is direct recommended for verbal quotation during teaching.*

Suggested responses*:
• A pandemic is an outbreak that spreads across a region
• There is the potential for a current strain of the Avian Flu (the H5N1 strain) to begin to infect humans. Several cases have been reported in Asia, but only from bird to human transmission (not human to human).
• Scientists and health officials warn that if this strain of the Avian Flu begins to spread from human to human it could become a pandemic outbreak.
• A strain of the Avian Flu is potentially deadly because we do not have immunity to it and a vaccine will take months to make and distribute.
• In 1918, a pandemic flu outbreak killed nearly 50 million people worldwide.

*See page 8 for more resources on pandemic flu information.

2. Guided Discussion with Writing Activity (20 minutes)
Instructor will draw the fire house they work at in the center of the board. Around it, instructor will draw a fire fighter, a family, a fire department and a town. Ask participants to predict the effects of a pandemic outbreak for these items. (Write answers near or under the drawing or have students go up and write response.) Suggested responses are on the next page.
Module 1: In My Fire House continued...

Start with the fire house. **What would happen to this fire station if a pandemic outbreak were to happen?** Suggested responses:
- Increased calls for service
- Experts predict that one third of workforce would be out sick
- Continuous restocking of equipment or limited supplies
- Death of coworker
- Quarantine or isolation

Next, ask them to step into the shoes of the fire chief and the employer. **What would happen to the department?** Suggested responses:
- Staffing issues, such as mandatory staffing, overtime and recall
- Administrative duties such as budgeting, payroll
- Call volume affects dispatch
- Equipment stocking
- Need for (Critical Incident Stress Management)CISM and Family Assistance Support Teams

**What would happen to your family?** Suggested responses:
- Family sick
- Shift changes
- Child care unavailable
- Deaths in family of elderly or young members
- Quarantine or isolation
(Ask to name a few, the next module cover this in-depth.)

**What might happen in the community?** Suggested responses:
- Schools close
- Grocery or other stores understaffed, limited supplies available
- Banks and other financial institutions close
- Public transportation system running slow
- Lack of available medical care
- Quarantine or isolation

**Can you name other areas that might be affected across the nation?** (Write these answers around the outside of the others.) Suggested responses:
- Banking/financial system and economy
- Transportation system (airlines, subways, buses, roads)
- Communications system (telephones, cell phones, Internet)
- Quarantine or isolation

**Is the department ready?**

*This would be an opportunity to review the department’s plan for Avian Flu/Pandemic Flu response, if it is available. Review the department’s planning checklist and/or SOPs for flu or outbreak response.*
While it may not seem like a concern of the department, the preparedness of every family is crucial in maintaining a working emergency response system. It is important that first responders have a plan for their family so that, with the peace of mind that their own family is prepared, they can do their job in the event of pandemic flu or any major emergency that may occur.

Summary
This lesson is focused on creating a family plan in case of a major emergency.

Learning objectives
- Decide what work/family issues need to be addressed in an emergency
- Develop alternative plans for family during a major emergency

Materials needed for each student
- Pen or pencil
- Handout “Emergency Plan for First Responder Families” worksheet

Facilitator Instructions

1. Guided Discussion (5 minutes)
   Introduce activity and refresh major points. What are major effects of a pandemic influenza on:
   - Home? (Caring for sick family member, unavailability of doctor or pediatrician)
   - Work? (Limited PPE, one third workforce is sick, increased calls for service)
   - Community? (Limited food and supplies, businesses and schools closed)

   Let’s consider those factors when thinking about a family’s situation.

2. Scenario (20 minutes)

   Read the scenario below aloud (or have a student read) about a family under a major emergency. Ask students what are some factors that the family must consider in this emergency.

   The Martins family lives in Kansas. The mother is a nurse and the father is a fire fighter. They have two children ages 6 and 12. The 6-year old has asthma. They just moved to Kansas two weeks ago, leaving behind relatives in another state. They also have a dog.

   A serious flu pandemic outbreak has hit their community. There are so many reported flu cases. The mother has been recalled to work at the hospital and the father is being required to stay on shift. On a normal day, the kids are in school. The family does not have any supplies on hand or an emergency plan.
Module 2: Making a Plan continued…

Lead a discussion with following questions:

**What are some of the challenges this family needs to take care of?**
**What could they have done before hand?**
**What might an emergency plan for this family look like?**

Ask other discussion questions:
- **What will they do if their cell phones don’t work?**
- **What will this family do if the subway, bus system or roads closed?**
- **Will they have enough food and water?**
- **What will they do if their children’s pediatrician is not available?**
- **What will they do if they get sick?**

3. Group Activity (25 minutes)

Students will now develop a plan for their family based on predicted factors. Hand out worksheet “Emergency Plan for First Responder Families” for participants to fill out during the activity. (You may also hand out optional readiness plans available at www.ready.gov.) Divide student into groups of two or three. They will need to develop a back up plan based on childcare, transportation, communication and health and welfare.

Groups should discuss the issues they might face with their own families and assist others with solutions to challenges they might face. They should brainstorm potential problems and solutions on scrap paper. They should help each other complete the worksheet, which includes coming up with alternative plans.

Write the bulleted list below on an easel pad or chalkboard to remind students of the factors behind an emergency family plan:
- Child care
- Transportation
- Communication
- Health and welfare

*Encourage students to fill out the form to the best of their ability and acknowledge they will have to consult their spouse or get more information or finish it later if time is limited.*

4. Debrief (10 minutes). After students have completed the form, ask the following evaluation questions:
- **What are some of the challenges you encountered while making your plan?**
- **What information were you unable to complete?**
- **What plan do you feel most sure about?**
- **What will you do to implement this plan?**
- **How will they share it with the family?**
- **Where will you keep the form?**
- **Who else outside the immediate family needs to know about the plan?**
- **What else might you add to the form?**
Module 3: Protecting Myself  *(Recommended time 25 minutes)*

**Summary**
This lesson is focused on the proper use of protective equipment while responding to potential flu patients.

**Learning objectives**
After completing this lesson, students will be better able to:
- Explain four key pieces of equipment for protection
- Assess appropriate time to put on PPE
- Summarize proper disposal and decontamination procedures
- Identify further steps in personal protection, such as restocking equipment

**Materials needed for each student**
- Response Equipment:
  - Sleeves/Gown
  - Latex Gloves
  - Eye protection
  - Respiratory Protection (mask)
  - Hand sanitizer

**Adaptation**
Students can work in pairs if equipment is limited. Encourage discussion between pairs as to when to use equipment.

**Facilitator Instructions**

1. Introduce activity: *This activity is a refresher for first responders to identify the correct PPE and how to use it effectively. We will focus on the proper timing of use of PPE. The flu is transferred through bodily liquids through the eyes, nose and mouth. These areas are most vulnerable to you being infected and you need to protect them.*

2. Directions: Instructor will read the scenario (on page 7) slowly aloud. **Students should don what they consider the appropriate PPE at the point in the scenario they consider appropriate.** Note when they don PPE. After all the scenario has been read, discuss the appropriate PPE and the correct time to don it.

3. Remind students of key facts while they put on equipment:
   - Not every first responder on the scene needs to risk infection by handling the patient
   - Universal precautions
   - Decontamination procedures

Note the appropriate PPE is listed after the scenario and the correct timing is indicted by three asterisks (***).
Module 3: Protecting Myself continued…

Scenario

Your unit has been dispatched to an unknown illness at a local bus stop. Although there have not been any cases of pandemic flu or Avian flu reported in your town, you have heard on the news that there are cases overseas. You arrive to find a family of three with flu-like symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Cough
- Exhaustion
- Vomiting

You suspect these patients have influenza based on their presentation. [***] You obtain vital signs and history. You learn that the family has just returned from a vacation in Southeast Asia. You request additional EMS units. You treat the patients and transport them to the nearest hospital.

***It is at this point students put on their PPE for the activity.
- Sleeves/Gown
- Latex Gloves
- Eye protection
- Respiratory Protection (mask)
- Hand sanitizer

4. Debrief

- **When did you put on your gear?**
- **When was the correct time?**
- **What were the clues you heard to put on your PPE?**
- **Why is each piece of equipment necessary?** (Hold up equipment and ask for each one).
- **What is the next step in this scenario?** (Sample responses: filing a report; calling the health department immediately)
Materials Checklist

Module 1: In My Fire House
- White board, chalk board, easel w/ pad or white paper taped to wall
- Markers if using paper

Module 2: Making a Plan
- Pen or pencil
- Handout “Emergency Plan for First Responder Families” worksheet

Module 3: Protecting Myself
For each participant or pair:
- Sleeves/Gown
- Latex Gloves
- Eye protection
- Respiratory Protection (mask)
- Hand sanitizer

Additional Resources

IAFF Pandemic Flu Home Page
www.iaff.org/pandemicflu

IAFF Online Education Program on the Pandemic Flu
http://www.iaff.org/academy/online/modules/avian/01.htm

United States Official U.S. Government website on Pandemic and Avian Influenzas
www.pandemicflu.gov

United States Government Emergency Preparedness
www.ready.gov

International Association of Fire Fighters
Department of Education
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