



WH_03 Epidemic / Pandemic Policy (Disease Control) DRAFT

Policy Statement

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.

- Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre Inc 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.
- Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre Inc will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public.
- Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre Inc will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

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.

Scope

This policy will apply to all clients and users of the centre, paid and unpaid staff (volunteers), and other service providers accessing space at the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre.

Policy

DBNC 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.

In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, DBNC will, as far as possible:

- Assist its clients, staff, volunteers 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.
- Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
- [Optional] Provide standard precautions such as personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, soap, and gloves).
- Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.

In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, DBNC requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions, keeping in mind any directives by the World Health Organization and other government bodies (eg www.health.gov.au):

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
- Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
- Make sure you follow good hygiene and encourage others to do the same. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues immediately.
- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you are well enough to work but would like to minimise the risk of infecting others, ask your manager/ supervisor whether you can temporarily work from home.
- Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places - especially if you are more at risk.
- If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify your manager/ supervisor as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.
- Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

Leave and Flexibility

- DBNC recognises that staff 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.



- Workers may make use of leave consistent with DBNC's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
- DBNC 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.

Notes

In carrying out the procedures listed below, DBNC 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.

1. 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.

- DBNC [will/may] subsidise any reasonable medical expenses incurred by any workers directed by DBNC to obtain medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work.
- DBNC [will/may, at its discretion] offer any staff member 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.
- Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, DBNC will aim to provide workers with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments.

Related Documents

- Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza ([AHMPPI](#))
- [ACT - Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [NSW - New South Wales](#)
- [NT - Northern Territory](#)
- [Qld - Queensland](#)
- [SA - South Australia](#)
- [Tas - Tasmania](#)
- [Vic - Victoria](#)
- [WA - Western Australia](#)
- Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for Critical Infrastructure Resilience: [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)

Procedure

Responsibilities

The **Director** 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 Director may override this if they see fit.
- Ensuring that the organisation's Leave and Workplace Health and Safety policies are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic Policy
- Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
 - DBNC's own human resources
 - DBNC's suppliers of goods and services
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
 - Giving notice to staff, volunteers, 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

Supervisors/managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.



Employees/volunteers are responsible for:

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

The **Epidemic Officer** is responsible for:

- Working with the Director on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan
- Advising the Director 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](#))

Procedures

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

Events

The Director, 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

The Director, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether:

- it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff/volunteers to work from home.
- staff/volunteer travel, (or 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/volunteers who work with clients or the public should be modified to minimise risks for all parties.

The Director, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, 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]**.

The Director, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.

Contractors and Suppliers

The Director, 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 (See Template 7, "Major suppliers to the organisation" from [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)).

Health Messaging

The Epidemic Officer shall familiarise staff/volunteers and others, as relevant, with recommended procedures on epidemic avoidance guidelines (e.g. handwashing, soap, sneezing policy) as appropriate.