

# Pandemic Flu Response Plan



Find the current version at: [www.skagit.edu/emergencyresponse](http://www.skagit.edu/emergencyresponse)

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose**

Skagit Valley College has established a Pandemic Flu Response Plan to guide the district in preparing for and responding to an influenza outbreak. The goals of the plan are:

- To protect the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors;
- To minimize the adverse impact on college operations, personnel and facilities;
- To provide for continuity of college operations to the greatest extent possible;
- To effectively communicate with all involved parties throughout the duration of a pandemic; and
- To recover following a pandemic as soon as possible.

## **Authority**

The SVC Pandemic Flu Response Plan is authorized by the President of the College. The plan is designed to work in conjunction with national, state and local public health officials and local first responders. The United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that a comprehensive approach of a community college to the management of a pandemic influenza outbreak consider performance in four key areas:

- Planning and Coordination;
- Continuity of Student Learning and Operations;
- Infection Control Policies and Procedures; and
- Communications Planning.

This plan addresses each area and is consistent with the mission and values of Skagit Valley College. A copy of the plan will be provided to the local emergency management offices, city police and fire departments, and county public health agencies.

The Pandemic Flu Response Plan will be maintained by the office of the president. A copy of the most current version of the plan will be posted at: **[www.skagit.edu/emergencyresponse](http://www.skagit.edu/emergencyresponse)** Proposed changes to the plan may be considered by the president's cabinet or others delegated for the purpose.

## II. Pandemic Classification Stages

The Pandemic Response Plan establishes four stages of response to the threat of pandemic flu. The President will designate which stage of pandemic flu emergency exists, based on available information and reports.

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE SITUATIONS</b>
<b>STAGE 1</b>	CDC, state or local health department warnings of impending threat.	Highly contagious and/or severe flu strains in the U.S. that seem likely to spread to the Northwest.
<b>STAGE 2</b>	Pandemic flu with severe health outcomes present in Washington.	Press and/or public health reports and warnings of widespread flu outbreaks in or near Washington.
<b>STAGE 3</b>	Pandemic flu cases rising locally.	Rising number of local cases reported. Spike in infections among SVC staff or students.
<b>STAGE 4</b>	A declaration by the president of Skagit Valley College that a pandemic flu emergency exists for the college.	Threat or existence of a rising number of flu infections among college employees or students. Absenteeism rates which inhibit the conduct of normal college business.

### III. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A pandemic flu emergency may have characteristics which are different than many other emergencies, including a longer planning timeframe and the likelihood of an extended period of implementation. During the implementation of a pandemic flu response, a major goal will be the continuation of critical college functions, including instruction, security, payroll, and other functions defined by the president.

Under foreseeable conditions during a pandemic flu response, SVC's organizational structure for decision-making and implementation will coincide with existing non-emergency roles. To the extent possible, the president's cabinet will serve the command staff functions. Roles and/or responsibilities for pandemic flu responses are defined in this plan for students and employees.

The president may activate an Expanded Flu Advisory Committee to help create and implement plans and inform the president and the cabinet. Members of the committee may represent:

- McIntyre Hall
- HeadStart
- Campus View Village
- Business Resource Center
- Elder Hostel
- Nursing and Health Occupations
- International Student Programs

An emergency response organizational structure which follows the concepts of the National Incident Management System has been created for other emergency situations. At any time, the president may activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and impose the organizational structure defined in the SVC All Hazards Emergency Response Plan.

If the President activates the EOC, a message will be sent from the Executive Assistant to the President to the Emergency Command and General Staffs by telephone, radio, email or other means alerting personnel to take appropriate action. Due to the threat of contagion, staff will NOT convene at a physical Emergency Operations Center during Stage 4 pandemic flu emergencies. Meetings and communications will be conducted via email and telephone.

## IV. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND PREPARATIONS

### PREPARATIONS: IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING

In order for any response to pandemic flu to be effective, proper preparations and training must occur. The president will designate staff to lead and report the completion of the performance objectives, and to report obstacles and gaps discovered.

The legal authorities will be reviewed and a policy framework prepared, including infection control policies and procedures. The College has long-standing infection control policies and procedures that will help limit the effect of pandemic influenza on campus, including the promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette, and bloodborne/airborne pathogens awareness and training. During this period, college employees will be asked to implement surface-cleaning, hygiene and social distancing protocols.

Budget and responsibility will be assigned for the procurement, storage and provision of a broad variety of infection prevention supplies such as soap, alcohol-based hand hygiene products, sanitary wipes, tissues, disposal receptacles, latex and non-latex gloves, sanitary masks, public health posters, appropriate signage, etc.

Policies for student and employee leave related to circumstances arising from a pandemic event have been and continue to be developed.

The adoption of pandemic travel restrictions will be considered. CDC and State Department websites will be consulted for advisories.

#### Performance Objectives for the preparation period

Complete, adopt and post the Pandemic Flu Response Plan

Name the members of a pandemic advisory committee and the Expanded Committee

Inform SVC employees of the Plan

Encourage employees to become vaccinated, if possible (seasonal and/or H1N1)

Inform SVC students of the Plan at the beginning of each quarter

Provide the Plan to local public health officials and first responders

Conduct appropriate training

Cabinet and key personnel establish home computer access links

Identify critical functions and critical personnel

Assign staff, back-up staff and support personnel for critical functions

Prepare faculty to sustain instruction

IT establish hardware, software and training

Develop continuity plans for all classes and inform students

Draft communications for each stage of pandemic flu response

Collaborate with and develop plans and communication for:

- HeadStart
- ECEAP
- Contractors or other non-college service providers
- UW Bothell
- Everett Community College / University Center
- Washington State University
- Campus View Village
- Homestay families
- McIntyre Hall
- Business Resource Center
- Food services
- Off-campus instructional sites
- Sites where students are interning
- Delivery of ordered products and regular mail
- Unanticipated deliveries
- Contract training instructors

Monitor these sites for higher education recommendations:

[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines\\_colleges.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm)

[policy guidance](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm) (<http://pandemicflu.gov/professional/school/>) regarding the H1N1 virus and its impact on the higher education community. On this site also are documents created by CDC ([health-focused communication toolkit](#)) specifically for colleges and universities.

Other resources: the Department of Education's [online flu resources](#) (<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/index.html> ) .

## V. DECLARATIONS OF PANDEMIC RESPONSE

### STAGE 1

President issues a declaration of stage 1 Pandemic Flu Response.

#### Communications:

President: Email to all SVC employees

President: Email to all students

Faculty: Forward president's message to all classes

Supervisors: Forward president's email and review hygiene precautions

PIO: release news to press

PIO: post public health posters, brochures

Student Services: distribute alcohol wipes, gloves, masks, disposal containers

Liaison: notify public health and first responder community

#### Cabinet meets to review plans

identify gaps or unanticipated events or circumstances

assign responsibility for addressing each item

#### Stage 1 Performance Objectives

All college personnel review, discuss and implement public health hygiene protocols

Communicate to all students the critical need to observe hygiene

Adopt and publicize policy that anyone with symptoms stay home per CDC

## STAGE 2

President issues declaration of stage 2 Pandemic Flu Response.

President and cabinet meet and establish Stage 2 strategies, including the need to forcefully reiterate hygiene behaviors and self-isolation for employees and students.

### Communications:

President: email to all SVC employees

President: email to all students

Faculty: forward president's message to all classes; discuss continuity plan

Supervisors: forward president's email and review unit plans

Liaison: notify public health and first responder community

### Stage 2 Performance Objectives

Review the reliability and dependability of information flow to Cabinet:

Absenteeism rates among employees, students

Reports of rumors, anxieties or community feedback

Plans for future events, trips and activities with students or in college facilities

Communication regarding legal, ethical, logistical or other barriers to college actions

Faculty: prepare all classes for instruction based on continuity plan

Faculty positive report of email/Bb/Angel test

### Communications:

President: email to Trustees, SBCTC

President: email to all SVC personnel

President: email to all students

PIO: release news to press and appropriate signage

## STAGE 3

President issues declaration of stage 3 Pandemic Flu Response.

### Communications:

EVP of I and SS: communicate with faculty, assess continuity plan

Faculty: voluntarily move instruction to the Internet, based on plan

Liaison: coordinate message with public health and first responder community

### Stage 3 Performance Objectives

Determine responsibility, in the event a decision is made, for implementing cancellation or modification of:

athletic events

public events

student field trips and student travel

employee travel

rental of facilities by outside groups

conversation partner program

Finalize Fact Sheet and distribute to front-line personnel

Positive reporting by faculty of communications with students via email

EVP of I and SS: Request faculty implement continuity plans if convenient

### Seek and discuss information about operations:

Leadership and Administration - analyze trigger points for Stage 4, other actions

Instructional Units – feedback regarding absenteeism, instruction

### Consider obstacles / obligations / problems with any further action steps

Instructional Units – special considerations for students in labs, etc

SBCTC reporting and federal reporting

Facilities – accepting deliveries, protecting physical plant

International Programs – SEVIS reporting to Homeland Security

Business Operations – bank deposits, costs of response options

Communications – community perception, alignment with other agency actions

## STAGE 4

President issues declaration of stage 4 Pandemic Flu Response.

President and Cabinet meet/conference call to discuss options. Based on reports of absenteeism, the severity of the flu, public health recommendations, and other information, options to be considered include:

- Convening meeting of the Expanded Pandemic Flu Advisory Committee

- Mandatory move to online instruction

- Cancellation of any or all:

  - athletic events

  - public events

  - student field trips and student travel

  - employee travel

  - rental of facilities by outside groups

  - conversation partner program

- Closure or partial closure of campuses

Communications:

- Inform personnel, students, community of college status, planned actions

- Liaison: coordinate message with public health and first responder community

### Stage 4 Performance Objectives

Review and assure information flow to Cabinet:

- IT - level of IT and infrastructure use vs. capacity issues

- Student Services – new student registration, testing issues

- CVV – resident health and responses

- HR – payroll and personnel issues

- Facilities – building maintenance, cleaning protocols

- International Programs – SEVIS reporting to Homeland Security

- Business Operations – bank deposits, campus deliveries

- Communications – community perception and feedback

## **Student Responsibilities**

All SVC students are responsible for knowing the personal hygiene behaviors recommended by public health authorities for limiting the spread of flu. Students are expected to observe these behaviors at all times.

Every class at SVC is planned to continue in the event of a college closure due to pandemic flu. You will be able to continue coursework via the internet, email, Blackboard or Angel software.

At the start of each quarter, students will learn the specific alternative delivery arrangements for each of their classes. When notified, students are responsible for following the procedures established by their instructor to receive instructions, complete assignments, and interact with faculty and/or other students.

It is your responsibility to notify your instructor immediately if you do not have home computer access or have other obstacles to your participation in class from off-campus.

Beginning immediately, students are responsible for monitoring their own health for any symptoms identified by public health officials as possible signs of influenza. Upon experiencing any such symptoms, students are strongly encouraged to leave college premises and remain away per CDC recommendations. (Those with flu symptoms should remain isolated until they have experienced no fever for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.)

**All students should note:** the CDC regards the following groups as high risk of complications from influenza if they get sick:

- children younger than 5 years old;
- people aged 65 years or older;
- adolescents (younger than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye's syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- pregnant women;
- adults and children who have asthma, other chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders such as diabetes;
- and adults and children with immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV).

**People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should call their health care provider** as soon as possible to determine if they need antiviral treatment.

Safety will be the first priority of college personnel. Students should follow the instructions of faculty, security or other college personnel. Students are reminded that the college website ([www.skagit.edu](http://www.skagit.edu)) is the most dependable source of information regarding closures, re-openings or other actions taken by the college.

## **Employee Responsibilities**

The SVC Pandemic Flu Response Plan provides procedures for minimizing the risk to health and safety of employees, students and the public. All SVC employees are responsible for knowing the personal hygiene behaviors recommended by public health authorities to minimize the spread of the flu. Employees are expected to observe these behaviors at all times.

Beginning immediately, employees are responsible for monitoring their own health for any symptoms identified by public health officials as possible signs of influenza. Upon experiencing any such symptoms, employees are strongly advised to leave college premises and remain away per CDC recommendations. (Those with flu symptoms should remain isolated until they have experienced no fever for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.)

**All employees should note:** the CDC regards the following groups as high risk of complications from influenza if they get sick:

- children younger than 5 years old;
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- pregnant women;
- adults and children who have asthma, other chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders such as diabetes;
- and adults and children with immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV).

**People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should call their health care provider** as soon as possible to determine if they need antiviral treatment.

Employees will receive communication from supervisors and from the college administration regarding the status of pandemic flu preparations. College personnel are reminded that the college website ([www.skagit.edu](http://www.skagit.edu)) is the most dependable source of information regarding closures, re-openings or other actions taken by the college.

All college communications about policy or the status of college operations originate with the president and go through the Public Information Office.

From the leave policy standpoint, the Labor Relations Office views this outbreak as the flu – short-term – and leave, including sick leave, is for that purpose. Skagit Valley College will use similar guidelines for all other staff (faculty and administrative/exempt).

If employees are out because of the flu, the college will not request a note from a physician as we might otherwise request for other types of illnesses and extended leaves.

The College may consider a "suspended operation" for all or any portion of college operations. Any suspended operations must be declared by the College President or a designee.

## V. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

***All communication regarding planning, implementing or concluding pandemic flu responses shall be approved by the president and occur through the PIO, the liaison or other delegated personnel.***

It is the policy of the college to fully and regularly inform the community about plans and actions taken in regard to a pandemic flu threat. Effective communications will help reduce rumors, maintain morale, and ensure continued, orderly operations.

The Public Information Officer will take the lead in conveying the College's actions to the college community and the public. The Director of Public Information or other designated staff will coordinate media contacts and act as the spokesperson for the College. The Liaison will coordinate with public health and emergency response agencies to plan the release of information to the media.

After approval by the president, the key messages and fact sheets will be released internally and externally. The Executive Assistant to the President will coordinate communication to the Trustees and the SBCTC.