



APTA SS-SEM-S-005-09, Rev. 2

First Published: Dec. 31, 2009

First Revision: April 1, 2013

Second Revision: May 28, 2021

Security Emergency Management Working Group

Developing a Transit Agency Response Plan to a Public Health Emergency

Abstract: This standard covers the creation and implementation of a basic response plan to a public health emergency.

Keywords: Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) prophylaxis, public health emergency, response, transit, virus

Summary: Once a local, state, or federal public health emergency (PHE) is declared or appears imminent, the Public Health Emergency Response Plan serves as a response framework for a transit agency. This plan will be used in conjunction with the COOP, EOP and any other agency specific emergency response standard operating procedures (SOPs) to provide comprehensive response planning. Transit agencies should consider determining the applicability of the various elements in this standard with regard to the requirements, plans and policies of their local health departments. Once the PHE Response Plan is prepared, the transit agency should provide it to the appropriate state and local agencies who have a need to know for coordination purposes.

Scope and purpose: The purpose of this standard is to aid transit agencies in the development of a PHE Response Plan. It outlines elements that should be covered by the plan and provides implementation and format suggestions and examples. It does not provide background information on various public health emergencies. Ample background information and answers to frequently asked questions are available in a number of guidelines developed by public health departments, the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and APTA (see References section). This document assumes that the PHE Response Plan will not serve as an independent comprehensive response plan in the case of a PHE. It is intended to cover extraordinary aspects specific to a public health emergency that are not

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. APTA standards are mandatory to the extent incorporated by an applicable statute or regulation. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In cases where this is a conflict or contradiction between an applicable law or regulation and this document, consult with a legal advisor to determine which document takes precedence.

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normally covered in the COOP, EOP or other SOPs. Consequently, if a public health emergency arises to the degree that it limits or restricts a transit agency's availability of personnel or cripples its ability to deliver normal service, the COOP should be triggered and used in conjunction with the PHE Response Plan.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA SS-SEM-S-005-09, Rev. 2, “Developing a Transit Agency Response Plan to a Public Health Emergency.”

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate bus transit systems
- individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail or bus transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how rail or bus transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Developing a Transit Agency Response Plan to a Public Health Emergency

1. Approval of a Public Health Emergency Response Plan

The CEO or other pertinent executive manager of the transit agency should define the process for approval of the PHE Response Plan, and periodic review or revision of the PHE Response Plan. People with authority to revise the PHE Response Plan should be clearly identified.

2. Elements of a PHE Response Plan

The PHE Response Plan should cover only elements specific to a declared public health emergency that is outside the scope of any other agency all-hazards response plans. These specific elements include the following:

- identification of alert phases that trigger specific action
- information and education program
- disinfection program
- sanitary aids to limit spread
- vaccine/antiviral medications
- service reduction, suspension and restoration

2.1 Identification of alert phases that trigger specific action

Planning and response to a public health emergency will depend on the risk involved. Unlike a catastrophic event such as an earthquake, a public health emergency likely will have various phases in the lifecycle. Each phase will need a different response strategy. For example, one phase might be the presence of unfounded fears and concern regarding a certain virus, and the response might call for education and public awareness regarding the low risk involved. Another phase, however, may be the onset of an epidemic or pandemic, which calls for extreme measures to limit its spread. The different phases of a public health emergency may be identified by local, state or federal health agencies, as demonstrated by the World Health Organization (WHO)-developed phases specific to influenza pandemics.

The transit agency should work with its local public health department and any other agencies having authority to act under such circumstances for further guidance when a public health emergency has been declared.

The PHE Response Plan should be applicable to all public health emergencies that threaten the health of the transit agency's local community, its passengers and its own employees.

2.2 Information and education program

Communication, in the form of information and educational programs, must be a major part of any PHE Response Plan. Communications should be divided into three distinct categories: communications with public health and emergency management departments; communications with employees and their families; and

communications to the riding public. Communications need to be coordinated with appropriate public health and emergency management departments so that the messages stay consistent. Transit asset availability also needs to be communicated to these departments. As the availability of assets changes, this will affect their response plans.

Response tasks should be identified and be commensurate with available knowledge of the health emergency. Tasks may evolve based upon availability of new information identified by the local public health agency or other stakeholders. Responsibility for each task to be performed should be clearly identified in the PHE Response Plan.

Information and educational training should be consistent with what is recommended by local and state health and emergency management departments. Transit agency staff should partner with those agencies to ensure that accurate and appropriate information is being released. An example listing internal information and education responses to different alert phases is shown as Appendix A, and an example listing external information and education responses is shown as Appendix B.

2.3 Disinfection program

The transit agency should coordinate with the local health department whenever there is a need to implement a disinfection program of the transit facilities and vehicles in response to a public health emergency. Specifically, the CDC defines disinfection as the killing of germs on surfaces or objects and differs from cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and other impurities from surfaces, but doesn't necessarily kill them, while sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects—either by killing them or removing them—to a safe level.

The transit agency should develop guidelines for employees to use whenever a disinfection program is implemented. An example listing of possible disinfection responses to different alert phases is shown in Appendix C. Transit agencies may also refer to APTA's "Developing a Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Checklist" White Paper for further disinfection guidance.

2.4 Sanitary aids to limit spread

Sanitary aids can assist significantly in limiting the spread of contagious infections. Additionally, sanitary aids can reassure transit employees and provide them with an added layer of protection in performing their daily functions.

An example of a table listing sanitary aid responses to different alert phases is shown in Appendix D. Transit agencies may also refer to the APTA "Developing a Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Checklist" White Paper for additional information on sanitary aids.

2.5 Prophylaxis (such as vaccine/antiviral medications)

Transit agencies should work with local health authorities to make prophylaxis available for essential transit agency employees when appropriate. Appendix E contains guidance on the potential use of prophylaxis such as vaccines and antiviral medications.

2.6 Service reduction, suspension and restoration

Throughout the life cycle of a public health emergency, a transit agency may need to adjust or reduce service due to the availability of employees who maintain and operate transit and paratransit vehicles or to comply with public health department recommendations and directives.

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Transit agencies should develop guidelines related to developing service reduction, suspending service and preparing system restoration plans. Service reduction planning should identify indicators that will be monitored with regard to ridership and employee availability and include strategies for service reduction.

An example of an outline for service reduction, shutdown and restoration is shown as Appendix F. Transit agencies may also refer to APTA's "Developing a Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Checklist" White Paper for additional information.

Related APTA standards

APTA-SS-SEM-S-005-09, “Establishing a Contagious Virus Response Plan”

APTA-SS-SEM-S-001-08, “Continuity of Operations Plan for Transit Agencies”

APTA-SS-SEM-WP-016-20, “Developing a Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Checklist”

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/.

Federal Transit Administration, FTA Emergency Relief Manual – Reference Manual for States and Transit Agencies on Response and Recovery from Declared Disasters and FTA’s Emergency Relief Program (49 U.S.C. 5324), Sept. 30, 2015. Available from National Technical Information Service/NTIS, Springfield, VA 22161. Email: orders@ntis.fedworld.gov.

World Health Organization (WHO), www.who.int.

Definitions

cleaning: removing germs, dirt, and other impurities from surfaces, but not necessarily killing them

disinfecting: killing germs on surfaces or objects

sanitizing: lowering the number of germs on surfaces or objects—either by killing them or removing them—to a safe level, according to public health standards or requirements

Abbreviations and acronyms

AGM	assistant general manager
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COOP	Continuity of Operation Plan
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
HVAC	heating, ventilation and air conditioning
IIPP	Injury and Illness Program Plan
NATSA	North American Transportation Services Association
OCC	Operations Control Center
PHE	public health emergency
SOP	standard operating procedure
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary of document changes

- N/A

Document history

Document Version	Working Group Vote	Public Comment/ Technical Oversight	CEO Approval	Policy & Planning Approval	Publish Date
First published	—	—	—	—	Dec. 31, 2009
First revision	—	—	—	—	Apr. 1, 2013
Second revision	Jan. 25, 2021	March 5, 2021	March 31, 2021	April 23, 2021	May 28, 2021

Appendix A: Example of an internal information and education table

NOTE: The relevance of the table contents may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Actions	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the transit agency's Injury and Illness Program Plan (IIPP) with a section on precautions against contagious infections. • Distribute personal hygiene information through the Safety Reminders Program. 	<p>Safety and Employee Communications departments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop articles on employee personal hygiene and precautions against contagious infections. • Publish articles in various agency publications. 	<p>Media, Public Affairs, Safety and Marketing departments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate articles through emails, the agency website and other forms of outreach. • Partner with public health and emergency management departments, especially their Risk Communication Message and Education sections, to acquire timely information and to coordinate appropriate news releases to employees and the riding public. 	<p>Media, Public Affairs, Safety, and Emergency Management departments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a training video and poster(s) on hygiene and precautionary measures against contagious infections both at work and in the home. • Commence disseminating the video and poster(s) to agency departments. • Place pertinent information on the agency website. 	<p>Media and Public Affairs Department, with support from Safety Department as needed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a more formal awareness program that includes personal visits to employee work locations to disseminate facts and to address concerns. This will commence with briefings to managers and unions to solicit their support. • Continue to update employees with status reports of the public health emergency, using all appropriate means of distribution. 	<p>Safety Department, Media and Public Affairs Department, select executive and department managers</p>

Appendix B: Example of an external information and education table

NOTE: The relevance of the table contents may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Actions	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with information provided by Health Services “Risk Communication Message and Education Groups,” put out information for passengers in the form of a fact sheet on the risks involved. • The information should be issued with the widest dissemination appropriate. 	<p>Media and Public Affairs Department</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare outreach/education materials in the form of news releases, passenger bulletins and website articles that provide guidance on personal hygiene, and keep patrons informed on the risks involved. • Commence disseminating information prepared. 	<p>Media and Public Affairs and Marketing departments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a video and poster(s) on personal hygiene and precautionary measures to take while riding on the system. Disseminate the video (including placing it on the public website) and poster(s) and continue to disseminate information. • Partner with public health and emergency management departments, especially their “Risk Communication Message and Education Group,” to acquire timely information, coordinate appropriate news releases to employees and the riding public, and provide consistent messaging. • Prepare letters to public officials regarding what the transit agency is doing. • Engage with private, nonprofit and stakeholder organizations to promote cleaner trains/buses/stations. 	<p>Media and Public Affairs and Marketing departments</p> <p>Government and Community Relations, Marketing, executive leadership</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to disseminate timely information to riding public. Start using station signage and on-vehicle posters to further the promotion of information. • Issue letters to public officials. 	<p>Media and Public Affairs and Marketing</p> <p>Government and Community Relations</p>

Appendix C: Example of disinfection program

NOTE: The relevance of the table contents may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Action	Responsibility
Commence planning for enhanced cleanliness of the system's vehicles and facilities, particularly high-touch surfaces, drinking water/sink spouts, and HVAC systems. The plan should assess in-house resources and explore contract services that are geared to the different alert phases. An estimate of the costs involved should be part of the planning process.	Transportation Ops, Safety, Risk, Facilities, Maintenance and Finance departments
Commence the initiative to provide cleaner buses, trains and stations so that patrons perceive the transit agency to be a safe environment.	Transportation Ops, Safety, Risk, Facilities, Maintenance and Finance departments
Commence program of disinfecting hand-contact surfaces, drinking water/sink spouts and HVAC systems in stations and on trains and buses several times throughout each day. One way of doing this could be at terminal points or layovers.	Transportation Ops, Safety, Risk, Facilities, Maintenance and Finance departments

Appendix D: Example of a sanitary aids table

NOTE: The relevance of the table contents may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Action	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish funding authorization for pending sanitary aid expenses related to the public health emergency. • Procure a supply of face masks and disinfectant gel in agency stores in reserve for use by agency employees. • Work with suppliers to ensure a steady flow of these aids for employees, given a progression of the contagious infection to higher alert levels. Estimate supplies needed for each alert phase. • Replace any dated supplies that have expired with new supplies. • Estimate disinfectant gel needed for patrons, and work with suppliers to ensure a steady flow of this item when the time arrives. 	Procurement, supported by user departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate disinfectant gels throughout the agency for employee use, including transportation reporting locations, stations, workshops, revenue/nonrevenue vehicles and office building(s). 	Affected departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require employees who work in patron high-density environments (including train and bus operators and station agents) to wear protective masks and non-latex protective gloves (as needed). • Provide disinfectant gels for use by patrons at each station and business common area (i.e., lobbies). 	Operations Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide protective masks to employees. • Promote social distancing (avoid face contact meetings, explore telecommuting). • Advise employees of universal protection measures such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wearing gloves when exposure to contaminated surfaces is likely • wearing face masks where exposure to contaminated air is likely • washing hands using warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds • taking prescribed medications correctly and on time • staying home to minimize spread of infection • covering coughs/sneezes using tissues, handkerchiefs or clothing • refraining from spreading bodily fluid/material in public/common areas 	All departments

Appendix E: Example of a prophylaxis table

NOTE: The relevance of the table contents may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Action	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with state and local health departments to track the U.S. government development of guidelines for the allocation of contagious virus vaccine, antiviral medications or other designated medications. • Partner with public health and emergency management agencies for prioritizing transit employees to receive vaccines and antiviral medications. 	Safety Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the availability and costs of purchasing medications on the open market. • Commence contracting process to engage appropriate medical assistance for administering these precautionary treatments to employees. 	Purchasing Department HR, Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuming that vaccines and/or antiviral medications were acquired either through state/local health departments or purchased on the open market, commence administering these precautionary treatments to employees. Priority should be given to those employees with the greatest exposure to high-density patron environments. 	HR and Safety to oversee process; affected departments to assist

Appendix F: Service reduction, suspension and restoration outline

NOTE: The relevance of the outline may vary from agency to agency and may change over time as knowledge progresses and information expands.

Service reduction

The following indicators will be monitored by the transit agency as potential service reduction triggers:

- ridership volume
- employee attendance
- asset availability

Service levels will be adjusted as necessary, with the following anticipated progression:

- Shorten trains.
- Drop certain train/bus runs from the schedule.
- Adopt Saturday service schedule.
- Adopt Sunday service schedule.
- Develop and implement adjusted service routes and schedules.
- Shut down the system.

Service reduction issues are anticipated to include the following:

- labor contract language
- employee welfare
- development of work rules/guidelines regarding hygiene practices in the workplace
- penalties/consequences for not complying with hygiene practices
- operations contract language

Service suspension

Given the need to suspend service, the primary objective will be to execute an orderly, safe conclusion of service, which preserves agency's assets in a condition that will facilitate later service restoration.

Major tasks involved in the suspension of service consist of the following:

- Complete operations (complete final service runs and store all vehicles).
- Close stations/bus terminals.
- Secure shop/yard buildings.
- Recover all types of maintenance equipment.
- Complete revenue pickup and processing.
- Deploy property protection.
- Establish communications and logistics plan for administrative work (possible coordination from home, individual office or other location as needed).
- Review service restoration plans and expectations with employees and key stakeholders.

Initial suspension of service operations

- Transportation will arrange for qualified personnel to complete service, including staffing of the Control Center.
- All revenue vehicles will be appropriately positioned in the yards at close of operations for the night.

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- Notifications will be provided to the dispatch centers of other transit providers in the area.

Initial shutdown of service vehicle maintenance

- Service vehicle operations will secure service vehicles in garages/yards.
- Inspect and key-off fleet.
- Property protection will be provided by transit police or contracted security, supported by other agency departments as necessary.

Initial shutdown of stations and shops

- Transportation will post personnel at stations/bus terminals and yard towers.
- Maintenance and Engineering departments will post personnel at maintenance shops and provide personnel for train control, power and mechanical, and computer support.
- Rail/bus maintenance will post personnel at each of the train/bus yards.
- Revenue collections will commence after station closing.
- Ongoing property protection will be provided by transit police or contracted security.

Initial shutdown of transit agency training center and offices

- The training center will be closed and secured upon receipt of a shutdown order.
- Managers of transit agency offices will evaluate their essential functions and either suspend work or develop contingency work plans as needed.
- Ongoing security will be provided by transit police or contracted security.
- Special security provisions will be implemented at the transit agency main offices.

Property/assets protection

After the shutdown, Operations will run circulation trains to keep the system exercised. Operations staff will be assigned as follows:

- personnel for Control Center
- personnel for circulation trains
- personnel for yard towers
- personnel for end-of-line storage locations
- personnel for shared-stations (i.e., with other transit agencies that are still operating)
- personnel for non-shared stations
- personnel for rail/bus maintenance support of circulation trains
- personnel for Maintenance and Engineering support of train control, power and mechanical, revenue collection, and computer systems
- personnel for the Logistics Center

Property protection will be provided by the transit police department or contracted security with the following support:

- Roving patrols by transit agency personnel to augment station/yard/shop checks
- agency to supply garage/yard fire watch
- service vehicle maintenance to supply shop fire watch

Restoration of service

In anticipation of service restoration, the following actions will be performed:

- Conduct complete system inspection before startup. This will include track, train control, power, communications and ventilation systems.
- Inspect stations/bus terminals, including power and operational checks of all equipment and supplies (cash, tickets, schedules and brochures).
- Complete any repairs or maintenance identified during the startup inspections.
- Inspect revenue vehicle fleet.

Service will commence after the aforementioned actions have been accomplished, and contingent upon approvals in accordance with the agency's leadership structure and the chief safety officer.