

Toronto Public Health Pandemic Plan A Planning Guide for Correctional Facilities

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Disclaimer: This Planning Guide is a tool to support planning for pandemic in the housing service providers and shelters. Toronto Public Health is not responsible for any misinterpretation or misuse of this guide.

1.0 Introduction

Toronto Public Health has prepared a number of planning guides to assist community partners in developing their own pandemic plans. The guides are intended to be used as planning tools. All agencies, businesses and other partners in the community should use these tools alongside the specific advice provided by federal, provincial and local authorities during an actual pandemic situation.

1.1 Purpose of this guide

This general planning identifies issues and critical elements of emergency preparedness that organizations should consider in planning for a pandemic. Although Toronto Public Health will identify broad public health issues, every organization must plan for the specific disruptions it will face during a pandemic.

The overall goal of pandemic planning is to reduce illness (morbidity), death (mortality), and social disruption resulting from a pandemic. Although this guide identifies specific issues associated with pandemic, much of the information applies to other emergencies as well.

The correctional facilities planning guide is an evolving document and as planning continues at the federal, provincial and local levels, updated information will be added.

2.0 Correctional Facilities – Specific Issues

2.1 Coordination and sharing of resources

The Ministry of the Solicitor General establishes, maintains, operates, and monitors Ontario's adult correctional facilities, probation and parole offices. Pandemic plans and policies are under the authority of this Ministry and the Government of Ontario.

Pandemic planning requires the coordination of many health-related and non-health-related agencies. When developing pandemic plans, correctional facilities should:

- Connect with other health organizations (e.g., hospitals, local physicians, Toronto Public Health, and laboratories)
- Review existing pandemic plans (e.g., Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan, Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, Toronto Pandemic Plan, etc.)
- Identify opportunities to share resources with other organizations during a pandemic

2.2 Inmate disease surveillance

Routine surveillance for illness in a facility will provide baseline data for the facility. This baseline data may help facilities identify early the possible presence of an outbreak or pandemic activity. Routine surveillance programs should be enhanced during a pandemic. An effective surveillance program should include:

- Screening of inmates being admitted into the facility using the Health Care Record from the Ministry of the Solicitor General – Correctional Services
- Education of inmates on the symptoms of illness to allow for passive surveillance (self-identification)
- Education of staff, especially those who work during off-peak hours, on the symptoms of illness
- Access to interpretation/translation services to assist in surveillance data collection for those not fluent in English

2.3 Admission of new inmates

Facilities should review existing policies for the admission of new inmates in an attempt to prevent the introduction of the novel virus during a pandemic.

- Screen all inmates on admission to the facility for illness. Inmates with symptoms should be placed directly into isolation (refer to section 2.5).
- Screen new inmates for known exposure to an individual with symptoms prior to incarceration. The relevant time period for exposure will be specific to the pandemic virus and will be communicated at the time of a pandemic once information is available. These exposed new inmates should be placed in a separate area of the facility.
- Screening can cease once the pandemic virus is known to be present in the facility. Inmates who develop symptoms should immediately be placed into isolation.
- Delay the admission of new inmates free of symptoms into a facility experiencing pandemic. If this is not possible ensure placement of the new inmate into the well population of the facility.
- Inmates should be advised of procedures that may be altered and implemented during a pandemic.

2.4 Assessing ill inmates

Correctional facilities can obtain remote assessment advice from health care providers operating Telehealth call centres on whether an ill inmate may need face-to-face assessment and/or treatment.

Some correctional facilities have on-site nursing or medical care or close ties with organizations or health care workers who can provide advice on the clinical management of ill inmates. To increase a facility's capacity to assess ill inmates the following is recommended:

- Prepare contact lists of health care providers and organizations able to provide consultation if needed, for example, staff at nearby health clinics
- Develop partnerships with health care providers, walk-in clinics, family physicians or emergency rooms

2.5 Isolation of ill inmates

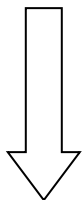
Not all ill inmates will be able or need to be hospitalized. During a pandemic, correctional facilities may need to provide basic health care support to ill inmates as hospitals may be overwhelmed.

Ideally, ill inmates should be isolated as soon as possible to reduce the transmission of the virus to others. Depending on the space available, correctional facilities may need to isolate several inmates with the virus in designated holding cells. Staff may encounter a range of challenges in isolating ill inmates. Individual correctional facilities need to think about possible strategies. Each facility faces its own challenges, depending on the population served, the services offered, and the physical layout of the facility. The following are general tips for isolation within a correctional facility:

- Place ill inmates in a single room, if possible.
- Separate inmates in the same room by more than 2 metres (6 feet).
- Arrange beds so that inmates lay head to toe relative to each other.
- Staff members may require personal protective equipment (e.g. N95 respirator, surgical mask) when they are within two metres of an ill inmate depending on the characteristics of the pandemic virus.
- Provide easy access to washrooms if possible, particularly when accommodating a group of ill inmates in a single room or area. If communal washrooms are used, clean them frequently.
- Enhance cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and common areas.
- Send ill individuals to hospitals, if necessary.

Different options from ideal to least ideal for the isolation of ill inmates in a correctional facility during a pandemic are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Isolation in Correctional Facilities

	1 Person Ill	2 – 10 People Ill	More than 10 People Ill	Majority of People Ill
<p style="text-align: center;">IDEAL</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">LEAST IDEAL</p>	Isolate in separate room	Accommodate together in separate room	Accommodate together on separate floor or in separate section of facility	Accommodate throughout entire site
	Isolate in shared room	Accommodate together in common area	Accommodate throughout entire site	
	Isolate in large shared space	Accommodate together at one end of floor		

2.6 Inmate transfers to other correctional facilities

During a pandemic, transfer of inmates between correctional facilities should be discouraged. Consult with local public health authorities where transfers are required to determine the quarantine period for inmates being transferred from a facility with pandemic activity to a facility free of activity.

Correctional facilities should limit, if possible, the transfer of inmates for court appearances since this process requires inmates to travel in crowded bailiff's vans and be held in court cells with other inmates. In order to reduce such transfers, video remand may be useful.

2.7 Transfers of ill inmates to hospital

To be able to meet pandemic demands, hospitals may develop a phased approach to surge capacity, including the deferral of non-pandemic care and the dynamic use of triage and admission/discharge criteria. During a pandemic, correctional facilities may need to provide basic health care support to ill inmates who do not meet admission criteria to hospital.

2.8 Deaths on site

An ill inmate may die from the virus in a correctional facility. Prior to a pandemic, facilities should establish connections with local funeral homes if connections have not already been established. Provide staff with the contact information for these funeral homes.

The coroner must be notified of all deaths that occur at a correctional facility. Correctional facilities should consider the following points:

- Consult with local public health authorities to determine if the bodies of people who died from the virus are considered contagious and if there are any additional precautions necessary to protect others.
- Cultural responses to death should be considered when handling human remains.
- Staff and inmates may experience heightened anxiety if a death occurs on site, therefore it may be necessary to provide psychological support to staff and inmates.
- Correctional facilities may need to identify areas where bodies can be stored temporarily until transportation to a morgue can be arranged, as well as appropriate storage for the deceased's personal effects.

2.9 Use of personal protective equipment

Correctional facilities will need to support inmates who are ill while in a correctional facility. It is important to base planning on the assumption that not all inmates who are ill with pandemic related illness can or need to be hospitalized.

Specific recommendations on the use of PPE will depend on the virus responsible and will be communicated at the time of a pandemic. The following recommendations for the use of personal protective equipment refer specifically to situations in which staff provide "care in place" to ill inmates.

- Sit next to rather than in front of a coughing inmate when providing care.
- Wear appropriate, recommended personal protective equipment (e.g., mask, eye protection) when providing direct care to an ill inmate with pandemic related illness.
- Gloves are recommended when there is a risk of hand contact with a client's body fluids. Gloves should be used as an additional measure and not as a substitute for hand hygiene.
- Wear gowns during client care where clothing might be contaminated.

2.10 Visitors

During a pandemic, visitor policies regarding friends, family members, agents, and others may need to be altered to reduce the spread of pandemic related illness within the inmate population. Consideration should be given to suspending visitors when there is pandemic activity in the City of Toronto. When developing policies regarding visitors, facilities should consider the following situations:

- **No pandemic related illness activity at the facility:**
 - Post signs at the entrance of the facility on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, as well as notices on the symptoms of pandemic related illness with instructions to stay home if ill or exposed to a person with symptoms in the time period prescribed by Toronto Public Health.
 - Screen all visitors for symptoms
 - Restrict entry of visitors with symptoms
 - Consider rescheduling visits of those who have had known exposure to a person with symptoms in the time period prescribed by Toronto Public Health
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations at the entrance of the facility and ask visitors to practice hand hygiene upon entering the facility
 - Enhance cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as phones used during inmate visits
- **Pandemic related illness activity at the facility:**
 - Post notification signs at the entrance to the facility, alerting visitors of pandemic related illness activity
 - If possible, postpone visits during an outbreak and advise visitors of the potential risk of acquiring pandemic related illness within the facility
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations at the entrance for visitors and ask visitors to practice hand hygiene upon entering the facility
 - Enhance cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as phones used during inmate visits
 - Provide information to family members on how to receive updates on an ill inmate
 - Consider providing easier access to telephones for use during a pandemic as an alternative to on-site visits.

2.11 Food services

During a pandemic, facilities should reinforce routine food safety and sanitation practices. Facilities should also consider the following:

- Reinforce regular hand washing by staff members who prepare food
- Use disposable cutlery and pre-packaged food, if staffing levels are low
- Consider stockpiling a 6-8-week supply of non-perishable food, in case deliveries of food are disrupted
- Plan for alternative food supplies in the event that regular catering services are interrupted.

For food safety concerns or recommendations on proper food handling, call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 or visit

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/food-safety/>

2.12 Handling Linen and Laundry

In most cases, no special precautions are recommended for handling linen and laundry during a pandemic, routine practices are sufficient. Should additional measures be necessary, this information will be communicated broadly at the time of a pandemic.

2.13 Waiting rooms in parole and probation offices

Parole and probation offices should assess the layout of their waiting rooms in order to minimize the spread of the pandemic virus. The following are some suggestions:

- Remove unnecessary items
- Position furniture to allow for the maximum separation between individuals in the room (at least 2 metres or 6 feet)
- If possible, choose furniture and surfaces that are easy to clean
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers, single-use tissues, and garbage cans in the room
- Post infection control information such as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette signs

3.0 Planning Checklist

3.1 Planning checklist - short version

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No	Comments
Does your correctional facility have an emergency plan?		
Have you made your employees aware of emergency response plans?		
Have you identified which tasks and positions would be essential during an emergency?		
Have you considered alternative strategies on how to continue service delivery when normal methods are disrupted?		
Have you developed a service continuity plan for your correctional facility for decreasing or altering the services that you offer?		
Have you considered how to keep your correctional facility operational with a large number of staff ill and unable to work?		
Do you have a mechanism to monitor increases in staff absenteeism?		
Have you considered how to deal with employees who report to work ill?		
Do you know where to get up-to-date and accurate information about the pandemic?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No	Comments
Is your cleaning staff aware of proper disinfecting techniques during a pandemic?		
Have you considered stockpiling necessary supplies?		
In case of a death on-site, do you know who to contact (ambulance, coroner, funeral home)?		
Have you considered how you would communicate information to your staff and inmates in an efficient manner?		
Have you considered how you would provide your staff with support and counseling?		

3.2 Planning checklist - long version

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
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Activation/Termination of Pandemic Flu Response Plan

Who has responsibility for activating the service continuity plan for your correctional facility and who is that person's back-up?		
Has your correctional facility identified a process through which the decision will be made to activate and terminate the plan?		
Do you have a communication strategy for reaching employees and service partners as a result of having to implement any section of the service continuity plan?		

Decision-making and Reporting

Who needs to approve the Pandemic Response Plan?		
Who is identified as being in charge in the event of a pandemic and are the roles of the various stakeholders clearly defined?		
Who makes what decisions?		

Agencies and Stakeholder Communications

Do you have a list of all relevant agencies and stakeholders and their contact information?		
Who notifies the various stakeholders?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
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Communications with Staff and the General Public

Who will be in charge of communicating to the employees in your correctional facility and who is their back up person(s) to assume this responsibility?		
Have you prepared site-specific notification for closures and contacts for the public?		
Who will be in charge of communicating with the general public?		
How will reduction/temporary termination of regular services be communicated to local stakeholders and the public?		
Who has authority to issue public service announcements/news releases and who is their alternate?		
How fast can these announcements be produced and approved?		
If mail service is interrupted, is there critical mail delivery which you need to make alternative arrangements for?		
<p>Do you know where to get up-to-date and accurate information about the pandemic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vaccine and antiviral medications information ▪ Infection control ▪ Personal care ▪ Public health measures 		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
Planning		
Who is in charge in the event of a pandemic episode and are the roles of the various stakeholders clearly defined? Who makes what decisions? Who notifies the various stakeholders?		
Who do you need input from both internally and externally to prepare and review a service continuity plan for your correctional facility? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elected officials ▪ Legal counsel ▪ Community partners ▪ Labour unions and bargaining agents 		
Who needs to approve the service continuity plan?		
Is the pandemic service continuity plan integrated with your emergency preparedness plan(s)?		
What is the staff capacity and are there provisions to bring in additional staff or volunteers?		
Have you identified the key services that must be provided? (Note: consider minor to major lack of availability of staff due to illness)		
Has your correctional facility identified possible key functions, staff positions, and supplies for each key service?		
Testing of the Plan		
How will you test and/or evaluate your service continuity plan?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
How will you test your communication systems, e.g., fan-out?		
Training and Orientation		
What are your training needs for staff and external stakeholders regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ infection control measures? ▪ environmental cleaning? ▪ equipment use? ▪ review of your correctional facility's service continuity plan, including explanation of roles and responsibilities? 		
What additional training will volunteers and reassigned staff require?		
Educational Materials		
Have educational materials been prepared?		
Have public education efforts been planned?		
Human Resources		
Is there a list of all employees, complete with telephone numbers (home and business) and job titles (including those recently retired)?		
Does your correctional facility maintain a fan-out list to contact employees?		
Is there a contact list of all senior staff within your correctional facility?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
If public transit becomes a problem, can employees arrange alternate forms of transportation to work, e.g., carpooling?		
Has your correctional facility addressed the issue of staff being unable to report to work due to possible school and daycare closures?		
Do you currently have adequate staffing for regular day-to-day function?		
Do you have a mechanism to monitor increases in staff absenteeism?		
Has your correctional facility prepared an inventory of skills and professional competencies in the event that people from your correctional facility are required to perform duties/functions in other areas to maintain essential services?		
How has your correctional facility planned to maintain the employee payroll?		
Health and Safety		
Is there a copy of the Health and Safety manual on site in your correctional facility?		
Have insurance and union issues been addressed?		
Has an inventory been prepared for specialized equipment/facilities that may be needed during a pandemic?		
Have liability issues been addressed for volunteers and re-assigned staff?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
Have support care services been planned for employees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychosocial support ▪ Grief counselling 		
Materials and Supplies		
Are there clearly stated policies and procedures that cover signing authority and acquisitions?		
Is there a mechanism that will ensure that additional equipment (e.g., cell phones, refrigerators, etc.) can be obtained with minimum delay?		
Who has authority for ordering repair/replacement for equipment and who is their alternate?		
Have you considered developing a 6-8-week stockpile of critical supplies required to maintain your “must do” services, and stockpile of infection control supplies (e.g., alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues)?		
Does your correctional facility have contact lists for all your suppliers and alternate suppliers?		
Has a recovery phase been planned for (e.g., depleted supplies or backlogs)?		
Documentation and Record Keeping		
Has your correctional facility developed appropriate record keeping procedures for such items as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ complaints and issues raised ▪ significant decisions that were made ▪ regular reporting to provincial or federal governments as required 		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
Are there people in your correctional facility who have sole access to incoming information (e.g., reports, complaints, etc.) and who are their alternates?		
Information and Technology		
Does your correctional facility maintain a central inventory of passwords to office equipment and electronic files?		
If your information and technology person is ill, who is their alternate?		
Does your correctional facility have access to inventory (including serial numbers) of all computer equipment, printers, fax machines, photocopiers in case repairs are needed?		
Does your correctional facility have contact lists for all equipment repair persons?		
Does your correctional facility have the staff and equipment for a website/telephone call-in line to update staff and inmates?		
Facilities		
Could any of the correctional facility's services be provided from another work location or from home?		
If necessary, could staff live at the work location or alternative work location for some period of time?		
Who is your security contact should there be a problem with physical access to your work location and who is their alternate?		

Planning Issues	Completed Yes/No/Not Applicable	COMMENTS Document who is responsible for each action and the decision-making process
How are courier packages generally sent out and received?		
Procurement of Additional Resources		
Who has the responsibility for procurement matters (e.g., ordering resources and/or equipment) during a pandemic?		
Who will be responsible for payment issues related to overtime and/or additional salary issues and who is their alternate?		
Who has the authority to hire contract/temporary workers and to take on volunteers and who is their alternate?		
Is there a pre-approval process in place for purchasing additional supplies? If not, how long does it take for the approval process?		
Post Pandemic		
What are the immediate lessons learned from the previous wave when planning for multiple pandemic waves?		
Who will be responsible for evaluating your response to the pandemic?		
What factors should be included in the evaluation?		
Who will have the authority to notify the various employees, inmates and stakeholders regarding the correctional facility's return to full service?		
Who will decide to reinstate full service?		