

EPIDEMIC-PANDEMIC POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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PART 1 EPIDEMIC-PANDEMIC POLICY

A. Introduction

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.

1. History Council of Victoria 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.
2. History Council of Victoria will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public.
3. History Council of Victoria will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that History Council of Victoria intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics, and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

C. Definition

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.

D. Scope

This policy applies to:

Employees	Directors	Officers	Contractors (including employees of contractors)	Volunteers	Suppliers	Consultants
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

E. Policy

1. History Council of Victoria 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.
2. In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, History Council of Victoria will, as far as possible:
 - i. Assist its clients, staff, volunteers and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
 - ii. Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.
 - iii. Support employees, volunteers, contractors and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
 - iv. Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern, taking into account advice from the relevant government authorities.
 - v. Cancel or postpone events/activities in response to advice from venue hosts and relevant government authorities.
3. In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, History Council of Victoria requires people covered by this Policy to take the following minimum precautions:
 - i. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

- ii. Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- iii. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
- iv. 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.
- v. Stay home if you feel unwell.
- vi. Work from home if you are well enough to work.
- vii. Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid travelling to such places - especially if you are more at risk.
- viii. If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify your supervisor as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.
- ix. Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

F. Leave and Flexibility

1. History Council of Victoria 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.
2. Workers may make use of leave consistent with History Council of Victoria's employment agreement (incorporating the leave policy), relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
3. History Council of Victoria 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.

G. Notes

In carrying out the procedures listed below, History Council of Victoria 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.

H. Related Documents

Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza:

- [Australia](#)
- [Vic - Victoria](#)

I. Legislation & Industrial Instruments

This policy & procedure is not intended to override any industrial instrument, contract, award or legislation.

Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)

PART 2 EPIDEMIC-PANDEMIC PROCEDURE

J. Responsibilities

1. The Chair is responsible for:
 - i. Nominating the Epidemic Officer. The normal expectation will be that the Executive Officer shall be appointed as Epidemic Officer, but the Chair may override this if they see fit.
 - ii. Ensuring that the organisation's Leave and Workplace Health and Safety procedures are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic Policy
 - iii. Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
 - History Council of Victoria's own human resources
 - History Council of Victoria's suppliers of goods and services
 - iv. 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
2. Supervisors/managers are responsible for:
 - i. Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.
3. Employees/volunteers are responsible for:
 - i. Abiding by the epidemic procedures specified below, when informed by authorised staff that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect

4. The Epidemic Officer is responsible for:
 - i. Working with the Chair on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan
 - ii. Advising the Chair when epidemic procedures should be activated
 - iii. Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance

K. Procedures

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

1. Events

The Epidemic Officer, with the advice of the Chair, 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.

2. Work procedures

- i. The Epidemic Officer, with the advice of the Chair, 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.
- ii. The Epidemic Officer, with the advice of the Chair, 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 appropriate paid leave.
- iii. The Chair, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may require personnel to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.

3. Contractors and suppliers

The Executive Officer, with the advice of the Chair, will consider on a continuing basis whether arrangements with existing contractors and suppliers need to be modified or supplemented to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.

L. Health Messaging

- 3.1 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.

PART 3 AUTHORISATION

Date of approval by the Board: 19 March 2020

History Council of Victoria Inc.