



# GLOSSARY

***Absenteeism rate:*** Percentage of employed people absent from work at a given point in time or over a certain period of time (number of employees absent divided by total number of employees, multiplied by 100).

***Antiviral medications:*** Medications that may be effective for treating people infected with a pandemic influenza virus, or for preventing illness in people who have been exposed to a pandemic influenza virus. Examples include oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®).

***Attack rate:*** See *clinical attack rate*.

***Audience (key or target audiences):*** a person, or group of people, who you want to reach with a communications message.

***Authority:*** In this toolkit, authority refers to a specific responsibility, usually related to decisionmaking in an emergency. Examples include the authority to close a business, the authority to make decisions on behalf on an organization or government, or the authority to implement policies or safety measures.

***Backgrounder:*** A written document for distribution to the media that provides background information related to an event, disease, or crisis.

***Biosecurity:*** The use of special equipment, clothing, cleaning, or behaviors that can help prevent exposure to or the spread of an infectious disease (or exposure to another environmental health threat).

***Call log:*** A document for keeping track of phone calls received via a public telephone hotline. Typically a call log includes: type of call (request for information, complaint, etc.), date/time of call, result of call (for example, referral provided, information provided, etc.), and any follow-up action needed.

***Case:*** A person who gets sick from a pandemic virus.

***Case fatality rate:*** The proportion of individuals who get sick and die from a pandemic virus (total number of people who die of the virus divided by total number of people who get sick; multiply by 100 to get percentage).

***Cash transfers:*** A way to provide people who have a sudden loss of *livelihood* (such as income) with enough money to cover their basic needs, by providing them with cash or vouchers (coupons).

***Cellular text message:*** A brief written message, usually 160 letters or less, sent electronically between mobile phones.

***Channel (communications channel):*** What, where, or how information is conveyed. Examples of communication channels are loud speakers, amateur shortwave radios, billboards, posters and flyers, newspapers, radio, television, cell phones, and the Internet.

***Childcare:*** Childcare programs include (1) non-residential centers or facilities that provide care to any number of children, (2) large family childcare homes, where one or more adults (providers) care for seven or more children in a provider's home, and (3) small family childcare homes, where one or more adults care for up to six children in a provider's home.

***Clinical attack rate (or illness rate):*** Percentage of people in a municipality (or other population) who get sick from a virus (number of people who get sick divided by total population, multiplied by 100).

***Clinically ill:*** People infected with the pandemic virus who show signs and symptoms of illness.

***Comfort care:*** Care provided to dying patients to keep them as comfortable as possible.

***Communications command center/post:*** Physical location that serves as the central point for all crisis-related communication and houses the communication support team.

***Communications goal:*** The desired result of a communication (such as an interview or press release) or ***key message***.

***Communications plan:*** A written plan for how the municipality will manage communications during a severe influenza pandemic or other crisis.

***Communications support team:*** The team responsible for handling communication during a crisis.

***Community (or group) interviews:*** Interviews with a large group of community members (approximately 25–30 people) in order to gather background information on a particular community or group. Often men and women are divided into separate groups in order to learn about their different views.

***Community mitigation strategy:*** A strategy designed to slow down or limit the transmission of a pandemic virus in a community.

***Comorbidity:*** The presence of other illnesses in addition to a primary illness; for example, when a pandemic influenza patient also has another disease such as tuberculosis or malaria.

***Containment:*** Preventing a virus or other infectious disease from spreading outside a localized area.

***Cough etiquette:*** Covering the mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing by using the elbow, shoulder, or disposable tissues, and washing hands often to avoid spreading an infection to others.

***Countermeasures:*** Medicines or drugs that can help prevent or treat a pandemic virus, including ***pre-pandemic vaccines***, ***pandemic vaccines***, and ***antiviral medications***.

***Critical infrastructure:*** Systems that are essential to a society's security, economy, public health, and/or safety, such as housing, water systems, market structures, roads, schools, and health centers.

**Disaster management team:** Employees or personnel—usually from multiple sectors—assigned by municipal leaders to manage the response to a disaster.

**Early, targeted, and layered non-pharmaceutical interventions strategy:** A strategy for implementing various *non-pharmaceutical interventions* early and consistently in a pandemic in order to slow or limit transmission of the virus in a community.

**Empathy:** The ability to identify with and understand somebody else's feelings or difficulties.

**Emergency operations center:** Refers to both the multisector team responsible for coordinating response to a disaster and the physical location of this team.

**Essential goods:** Food and other supplies that a municipality needs to survive, such as medical supplies and gasoline.

**Essential services:** Services and functions that must be continued, even during a pandemic, to maintain the health and welfare of the municipality. Without them sickness, poverty, violence, and chaos would likely result.

**Essential workers:** Personnel needed to maintain essential services.

**Face mask:** Disposable mask covering the nose and mouth, designed to prevent the transmission of influenza germs from one person to another.

**Fact sheet:** A printed document, usually no more than one page, providing basic facts about a disease or situation in an easy-to-read format, such as bulleted sentences.

**Faith-based organization:** An organization that holds religious or worship services, or is affiliated with a particular religion or house of worship (church, synagogue, mosque, etc.).

**First announcement:** First official message to the public—either through the media or directly—about a crisis situation.

**First responders:** A wide variety of community representatives, staff, and volunteers who will provide critical information, care, and leadership during a pandemic influenza crisis.

**Focus group discussions:** A way to get a quick understanding of a specific population's views on a key issue; a facilitator or moderator leads a discussion with approximately 6–8 people.

**Food security:** A condition in which people can grow, buy, or trade for enough nutritious food for a healthy and active life. The term food security and the opposite condition, food insecurity, may be applied to individuals, families, groups, or communities, as well as cities or regions.

**Hand hygiene:** Frequent hand-washing with soap and water for 20 seconds, or rubbing hands with alcohol-based products (gels, rinses, foams) that do not require the use of water, in order to prevent the spread of illness.

**Hotline:** A direct telephone line available for the public to call into 24 hours a day to ask questions about a crisis or other issue of public concern.

**Illness rate (or clinical attack rate):** Percentage of population that gets sick from a virus (number of people who get sick divided by total population, multiplied by 100).

**Immunity:** The ability to avoid infection or disease through the body's immune system. Immunity can be innate (present at or around birth) or acquired, either through exposure to disease or through vaccination.

**Impact projection:** The estimated number of deaths and seriously ill persons that will require healthcare during a pandemic.

**Incubation period:** The amount of time (hours, days, or weeks) between when a person is first exposed to an infection or virus and when the first symptoms (like coughing or fever) begin.

**Infection control:** Ways to reduce the risk of transmission of an infection or virus from infected individuals to other people (including hand hygiene, cough etiquette, use of personal protective equipment such as face masks and respirators, and disinfection).

**Influenza pandemic:** A worldwide epidemic caused by the emergence of a new influenza virus *strain* to which humans have little or no *immunity*, and which develops the ability to infect humans and to be transmitted efficiently between humans for a sustained period of time.

**Isolation:** Keeping sick people away from others to prevent them from infecting others; can be done in a hospital, clinic, or at home.

**Key informant interviews:** One of several methods of gathering information about a community for the purpose of evaluating the community's vulnerability in terms of *food security* and *livelihood security*; specifically, individual interviews with people who are knowledgeable about certain aspects of a community (such as community leaders, shopkeepers, healthcare providers, or teachers) or people who are highly vulnerable and/or have a unique perspective (such as widows, older people, orphans, or the disabled).

**Key message:** Important point that a communicator (such as a municipal leader or spokesperson) wants an audience to remember after an interview, press conference, etc.

**Livelihood groups:** Groups of people who have similar sources of income and/or food as well as similar social/cultural practices; such groups typically share a similar level of risk for food insecurity (see *food security* above).

**Livelihoods:** The skills, abilities, and assets (such as money saved in bank accounts, land owned, and access to social services) that people have; all of their activities; and the decisions they make that help them survive each day. This includes, but is not limited to, the way people earn money.

**Livelihood security:** The ability to maintain a healthy and secure life.

**Media advisory:** A brief document (one page or less) presenting basic information about an upcoming event to media outlets, usually with the purpose of inviting them to attend a special event, such as a vaccination clinic or a news conference.

**Media contact list:** A list of key contacts at media outlets, including the name and title of media representatives, phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses.

**Media inquiry:** A question or request for information from a media outlet.

**Media monitoring:** Watching, listening, and reading the news in order to keep track of what is being reported, note any false information or rumors that need to be corrected, and evaluate the success of communications in order to adjust messages as needed.

**Media monitoring system/report:** A system for monitoring the media, as described above; and written reports that present the results of this monitoring, on a weekly basis for example.

**Message map:** A visual aid that serves as a quick reference to an organization's messages, their sequence, and their importance, which municipal leaders and their communications team can use to respond to anticipated questions or concerns about a pandemic or other crisis.

**Misinformation:** False information.

**Morbidity rate:** The number of people in a population who have a disease at a given time (e.g., 20,000 cases of influenza in a population of 100,000 people equals a 20% morbidity rate).

**Mortality rate:** Percentage of people who die from the illness over a specific period of time (e.g., 20 deaths per 100,000 people per week equals a 0.02% mortality rate).

**Mult box (or press box):** A device that connects a podium, speaker, and microphone; may be needed by broadcast reporters to record the proceedings of press conferences.

**Municipal leadership team:** Personnel responsible for the regular, daily functioning of a municipality, typically composed of the mayor, his or her immediate support staff, and other officials.

**News briefing:** A brief session at which government officials (or other authorities) update the media on the progression of events and/or new information related to an ongoing crisis; typically shorter than a press conference.

**News conference:** See *press conference*.

**NGOs:** Non-governmental organizations. Examples are the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Health Organization, and Salvation Army.

**Non-essential services:** Services that are not essential to a municipality's survival and thus can be stopped or closed down during a pandemic (for example, barber shops or libraries).

**Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs):** Non-medical actions that can limit the spread of a disease, such as *social distancing* and *infection control*.

**Op-ed (opposite editorial):** A newspaper article expressing an opinion, usually written by a prominent journalist or an expert in a particular subject, and printed on the opinion page.

**Pandemic vaccine:** Vaccine to help prevent people from getting infected with a pandemic virus; such a vaccine can be developed only after the pandemic virus emerges.

**Pandemic wave:** Pandemics typically occur in a series of waves, each one lasting approximately 6 to 12 weeks.

**Peak week:** The worst week of a pandemic wave, when the greatest amount of deaths will occur, usually around the midpoint of the wave.

**Personal protective equipment:** Any type of clothing, equipment, or device used to protect workers while doing their jobs; for healthcare workers, protective equipment usually includes gowns, face shields, gloves, face masks, and respirators.

**Post-exposure prophylaxis:** Administering antiviral medications to individuals who have been exposed to people infected with influenza, but may not have gotten sick, in order to prevent further transmission of the disease.

**Pre-pandemic vaccine:** Vaccine to protect people against strains of influenza virus that may have the potential to cause a pandemic (typically virus strains that have occurred in animals and infected some humans, as happened with the avian influenza H5N1 virus). Because this type of vaccine is prepared before a new pandemic virus begins, it is not known how much protection it will provide against the actual pandemic virus.

**Preparedness:** Being prepared for unpredictable events such as a pandemic, other public health emergency, or natural disaster.

**Post-trigger:** When international leaders announce that a pandemic influenza virus is spreading easily from person to person and is likely to spread around the entire world (pandemic Phase 6, according to the World Health Organization). This starts the “response phase” in pandemic influenza programs.

**Press conference (or news conference):** A formal event in which government officials and/or other authorities invite journalists to hear new information and ask questions about a crisis, event, or situation.

**Press release:** A one to two page document for distribution to the media, usually to provide basic information (who, what, when, where, why) on an event or an update on an ongoing situation such as a pandemic.

**Prophylaxis:** Something one can do to prevent a disease or illness. In relation to pandemic influenza, this specifically refers to giving antiviral medications to healthy people in order to prevent the virus from spreading.

**Public information:** Information that needs to be shared with the public.

**Public information officer:** Official of a government, government agency, or other organization who is responsible for providing information to the public and the media.

**Public safety sector:** The forces/departments responsible for the safety of a population, such as the police, military, or civil defense.

**Public service announcement:** A 30- to 60-second broadcast designed to persuade an audience to take specific actions, or to adopt a particular viewpoint on an issue.

**Quarantine:** Keeping people who may have been exposed to an illness but are not yet sick away from others for a long enough period of time to determine if they are going to get the illness, in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

**Rapid diagnostic test:** Medical test for quickly confirming whether someone has been infected with a specific influenza strain.

**Recovery:** The process of recovering from a shock (like a pandemic) and returning to a state of well-being that is equal to or greater than pre-disaster living conditions.

**Resource-poor countries:** Countries that have severe gaps in pandemic preparedness and capacity for responding to a pandemic, and that may generally lack critical economic, health, and social resources for their populations.

**Response:** Actions taken by leaders, communities, and individuals to reduce the impact of a pandemic once it reaches the immediate geographic region.

**Resource-rich country:** Countries that have relatively greater economic, health, and social resources for responding to a pandemic than resource-poor countries.

**Safety net programs:** Programs that provide resources to disadvantaged groups; for example, homeless shelters, unemployment benefits, food distribution, etc.

**Seasonal influenza:** Influenza virus infections by strains that occur in familiar annual patterns. Because these strains have infected humans in the past, most people already have some protection, or *immunity*, against them.

**Second- and third-order consequences:** Unintended consequences resulting from a social distancing measure. For example, closing schools may lead to increased employee absenteeism, a second-order consequence, because parents will need to stay home to care for their children. High absenteeism may lead employers to close workplaces, which could result in loss of income for employees, a third-order consequence.

**Sector:** A distinct subdivision of a society, economy, or government whose components share a similar function. A municipality may be grouped into different sectors depending upon the roles or areas of expertise of their members within the community (such as the health, transportation, or utilities sectors).

**Social distancing:** Measures to increase the space between people and decrease contact among people in order to reduce the spread of an infectious disease like influenza, such as school closures, work closures, and cancellation of public gatherings.

**Social networking site:** A Web site that provides an online social community, usually open to the public, where individuals can post and read others' personal information and communicate with each other electronically.

**Spokesperson:** Person who communicates with the media and the public on behalf of a government or organization.

**Strain (or virus strain):** A subcategory of an influenza virus. There are many different strains of influenza viruses, which change constantly and create new strains that replace older ones.

**Surge capacity:** The ability of an organization to provide more services than usual for a limited period of time in order to meet increased demand during a crisis such as a pandemic. For example, the ability of medical laboratories to provide greater numbers of vaccines, or the ability of a hospital to care for more patients than usual.

**Surgical mask:** Disposable face mask that covers the mouth and nose, used to prevent the transmission of germs.

**Surveillance:** Continuous monitoring of a disease (both cases of illness and its spread) with the goal of controlling the disease.

**Sympathy:** The feeling or expression of pity or sorrow for the pain or distress of somebody else.

**Talking points:** Main points, prepared and written down in advance, for a spokesperson or other official to focus on during an interview, press conference, or other media appearance; usually closely related to an organization's key messages.

**Target audience:** The people to whom a message, communication, or information is directed.

**Telework:** Working away from the usual workplace (often at home) and communicating with the workplace via computer (usually e-mail and/or internet), telephone, or fax.

**Triage:** A way to prioritize medical treatment for patients based on the severity of their conditions—in order to save the most lives—when it is not possible to treat all patients immediately.

**Virulence:** The ability of a virus or bacteria to cause illness, and the severity of the illness caused.

**Waves:** Unlike most disasters, which tend to happen as a single event that ends within a day or so (such as a hurricane or an earthquake), a pandemic may occur in a series of waves, each one lasting approximately 6–12 weeks. The very worst week of the first wave is likely to occur around the fourth or fifth week after the pandemic starts in your area. It is difficult to determine the impact of each subsequent wave. However, because of the additional strain that each successive wave places on a municipality's resources, each wave has the potential to be more lethal than the previous one.

**Wealth ranking (categories):** A way of categorizing people in a community according to community members' perceptions of how well off or poor people seem to be (for example, categories are typically “very poor,” “poor,” “better off,” and “well off”). These categories usually are defined not just by financial wealth, but also by how people earn money and how much access they have to community services such as healthcare.

**This glossary has been adapted in part from the following source:**

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). 2007. Appendix 1: Glossary of terms, in *Interim pre-pandemic planning guidance: Community strategy for pandemic influenza mitigation in the United States*, 71-74. [http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/community\\_mitigation.pdf](http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/community_mitigation.pdf) (accessed May 15, 2009).