



# **RISK COMMUNICATION SAVES LIVES & LIVELIHOODS**

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Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**



**World Health  
Organization**  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Americas**

# RISK COMMUNICATION

fights disease & protects economies



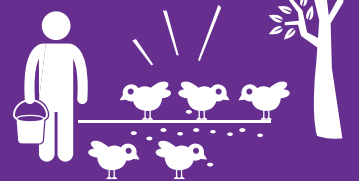
*Stops spread of  
illness & saves lives*



*Prevents travel & trade  
restrictions*



*Protects livestock  
& livelihoods*



*Protects  
economic development*



# Strong emergency risk communication: stopping disease spread, saving lives & livelihoods

In a pandemic or other public health emergency, authorities must engage individuals, communities and businesses, listen and respond to concerns, and support everyone by working together to prevent disease spread. This dynamic exchange of life-saving information is called **risk communication**.

Risk communication prevents spread of disease, saves lives and protects national and local economies. Without effective risk communication, people do not have the information they need to protect themselves, their families and their livelihoods.

When people know how to protect themselves, they can help stop the spread of disease, limiting the economic and social impact of an outbreak or emergency.

## A priority for every country

Emergency risk communication is recognized as an essential component of preparedness and response public health emergencies in many international agreements and WHO frameworks such as:

- International Health Regulations (2005)
- Pandemic Influenza Risk Management, WHO Interim Guidance (2013)
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (2011)

WHO's risk communication is a core element of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (PIP) which brings together governments, industry, other stakeholders and WHO to implement a global approach to pandemic influenza preparedness and response. Its key goal includes improving and strengthening the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential.

# **Risk communication is a dynamic process**

of sharing & responding to information  
about a public health threat.

**Listening & responding  
to concerns**



**Sharing information  
quickly in ways people trust**



**Building trust  
& understanding**



**Engaging everyone  
in fighting disease**



**Stable economies  
& communities**





# Strong risk communication is built before an emergency

Effective risk communication *during* a health emergency requires planning and investment *before* the emergency occurs.

Many countries have learned that it is better to have a strong system in place that can respond to any health emergency, rather than to prepare for each emergency individually. Taking this 'all-hazards approach', WHO supports countries by strengthening their ability to prepare for and respond to any public health hazard, including pandemic influenza.

Prior to a pandemic or other public health emergency, countries should have risk communication systems in place to:

- deploy trained risk communication professionals to support the response from the very beginning until the end of the emergency;
- reach out to and engage local communities and respond to their concerns;
- rapidly produce and share communications through channels that people use and trust;
- test the effectiveness and appropriateness of public health messaging, and adjust advice as needed;
- test risk communication capacity, including through simulation exercises; and
- coordinate communications between government, partners and affected sectors such as public health, agriculture, livestock, transport, trade, tourism, points of entry and education as well as with local industry and civil society.



# PAHO/WHO leadership & support

Under the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, PAHO/WHO helps countries strengthen risk communication skills and systems, working closely with governments and partners. This helps countries prepare for future public health emergencies such as pandemic influenza.

PAHO/WHO can provide advice and resources to strengthen risk communication in all countries. For priority countries, additional support includes:

- needs analysis to identify strengths, barriers and gaps;
- priority-setting workshops to agree guiding principles and develop an action plan;
- technical support for policy development and institutional planning;
- landscape mapping to understand local and national media audience and reach;
- training and skills development;
- executive coaching for senior decision-makers;
- media workshops for journalists and editors; and
- simulation and tabletop exercises to test national emergency risk communication capacity.



# POOR COMMUNICATION

devastates communities & local industry



*Leads to illness,  
fear & death*



*Hurts  
the economy*



*Destroys jobs*



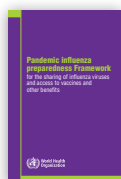
*Incites civil  
unrest*

# More information



## About WHO's risk communication capacity-building activities

<http://www.who.int/risk-communication/en/>



## About the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework

[www.who.int/influenza/pip](http://www.who.int/influenza/pip)



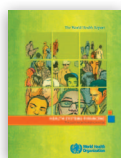
## About the International Health Regulations

[www.who.int/topics/international\\_health\\_regulations](http://www.who.int/topics/international_health_regulations)



## About WHO's Emergency Response Framework

<http://www.who.int/hac/about/erf/en>



## About health systems strengthening

[www.who.int/topics/health\\_systems](http://www.who.int/topics/health_systems)



**For further information about PAHO/WHO's risk communication work, contact us at:**  
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