

*Excerpt from IREM key report, "Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Real Estate Manager's Guide to Protecting People, Property and Assets"*

## Prevention Procedures

Forming a pandemic team or teams is a good first step in building a response plan for pandemics. When considering who should participate it is important to include representatives from various departments such as operations, information technology (IT) and human resources.

The team will need to develop plans and assign responsibilities for dealing with each aspect of a possible pandemic. Start by seeking help from a preparedness advisory organization to determine how a pandemic will affect specific operational components of your business and what needs to be done to ensure continuity. Because of the anticipation of high absenteeism, many property managers will want to consider cross-training employees to enhance their abilities to multi-task more efficiently. A person's ability to handle stressful situations should definitely be considered. Understand that it is not always the person with the most prestigious title that does well in an emergency.

If you already have a business continuity plan written, that's a good place for the team to begin its evaluation and determine any necessary enhancements to cover a pandemic. The team should establish an emergency communication plan that identifies, at a minimum, the key contact people, the chain of command and the method that will be used, and a process for tracking communications. The communication component of the plan should include a protocol for warning employees during an emergency, implementation of the plan and testing the comfort of the plan with the employees, an evaluation of all computer systems to determine load capacity, determining and carrying out information to clients and customers and personal and public hygiene.

The team should also identify the essential business components—employees, operations, raw materials, technology needs and so on.

Site managers will most likely be expected to take the lead on implementation of the company plan at their particular building. They will want to provide enough information to tenants so as to encourage them to have a plan of their own. It is advisable that the property manager work with tenants/businesses in commercial settings to ensure that each business plan is integrated with the building's plan.