

Press Releases

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OTS 07-089 - FFIEC Releases Guidance on Pandemic Planning

Office of Thrift Supervision

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For further information

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Joint Release

**Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Office of Thrift Supervision
National Credit Union Administration
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
Conference of State Bank Supervisors**

FFIEC Releases Guidance on Pandemic Planning

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) issued guidance today for use by financial institutions in identifying the continuity planning that should be in place to minimize the potential adverse effects of a pandemic. This guidance expands upon the contents of the Interagency Advisory on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness issued in March 2006.

Pandemic planning presents unique challenges to financial institutions. Unlike most natural or technical disasters and malicious acts, the impact of a pandemic is much more difficult to determine because of the anticipated difference in scale and duration. As a result of these differences, no individual or organization is safe from the potential adverse effects of a pandemic event. Experts believe the most significant challenge may be the severe staffing shortages that will likely result from a pandemic outbreak.

The FFIEC agencies believe the potentially significant effects a pandemic could have on an institution justify establishing plans to address how each institution will manage a pandemic event.

Accordingly, an institution's business continuity plan should include:

1. A preventive program to reduce the likelihood an institution's operation will be significantly affected by a pandemic event;
2. A documented strategy that provides for scaling pandemic efforts commensurate with the particular stages of a pandemic outbreak;

3. A comprehensive framework of facilities, systems, or procedures to continue critical operations if large numbers of staff members are unavailable for prolonged periods;
4. A testing program to ensure the institution's pandemic planning practices and capabilities are effective and will allow critical operations to continue; and
5. An oversight program to ensure ongoing review and updates to the pandemic plan.

The guidance is attached.

Institutions should direct questions to their primary federal regulator.

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Attachment - <http://www.occ.gov/static/news-issuances/ots/press-releases/ots-pr-2007-89a.pdf>

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The Office of Thrift Supervision, an office of the Department of the Treasury, regulates and supervises the nation's thrift industry. OTS's mission is to ensure the safety and soundness of, and compliance with consumer protection laws by, thrift institutions, and to support their role as home mortgage lenders and providers of other community credit and financial services. OTS also oversees the activities and operations of thrift holding companies that own or control thrift institutions. Copies of OTS news releases and other documents are available at the OTS web page at www.ots.treas.gov.