

Avian flu pandemic



The risk

The risk of the H5N1 avian flu virus mutating into a human variety and significantly impacting your business is as high as - or maybe higher than - many of the risks for which you have a Business Continuity Plan. Latest scientific advice is that a mutation of avian flu into a separate form that passes easily between humans, while not yet inevitable, is extremely likely. It has happened before on a global scale when, in 1918-19, 228,000 died in the UK with an estimated 50 million deaths worldwide.

Business continuity planning not enough

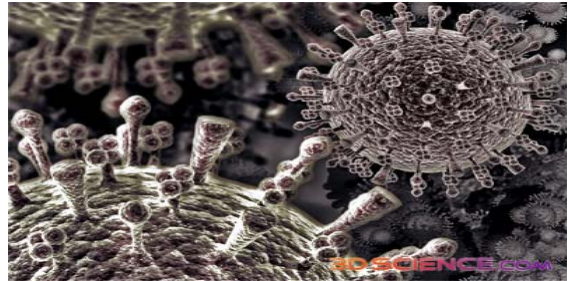
Whilst existing continuity plans should be capable of protecting your business in a wide variety of situations, avian flu is sufficiently different to warrant a completely fresh approach. You will certainly reap some benefit from your previous business continuity preparations but, because of the proven nature of this disease, you will need to do more.

Business continuity plans protect you best after a single sudden event disables or destroys the predominately physical assets on which you rely – they re-deploy your staff and re-direct your business activities while damage is repaired and facilities restored.

Avian flu is a living, evolving threat, and it behaves differently.

If the bird-specific disease becomes endemic in this region, there will be infrastructure, logistic and probable regulatory impacts on business as a whole.

In the human pandemic scenario, outbreaks of the disease are expected to hit in successive waves, each of several weeks duration. Paradoxically it is likely to be the young and the fit in every organisation who are most at risk. During each wave, large numbers of employees (yours and those working for the services that are critical to your business) will be away from work. Some – maybe many - may never return.



What you can do

There is no 'silver bullet' solution but there is a great deal that can be done, starting now.

- ⊙ Begin by gathering and analysing the critical information you will need to respond to these crises.
- ⊙ Appraise your existing plans in these new contexts.
- ⊙ Then, be ready for a more proactive approach as more becomes known about the strain and likely effects of the disease and if a human pandemic appears to be more inevitable.

idRisk will take you through these stages until you have built the knowledge base, flexibility and resilience you need for your business, at a pace that is determined by the progress of the disease and the likelihood of it becoming a human pandemic.

We have developed our capability to lead you through a process which ensures that your business will benefit, whatever the outcome. To ensure a fit with your business and your people, our experienced team of business risk consultants includes specialists in business continuity planning, crisis management, strategy and human resources.

We need to create a preparedness for tomorrow's risks, not yesterday's. Human pandemic has suddenly become a potent threat to the continuity and survival of your business. idRisk can help you to assess where and how to best direct your efforts and then to create the resilience you will need. We can, if required, help you upgrade your existing business continuity or crisis management plans to meet the new challenges of tomorrow.

idRisk is a network of specialised, independent risk consultants and trainers, each an acknowledged expert in his or her field. Individually or collectively, we provide comprehensive, high quality unbiased advice on, and solutions to, all aspects of risk.

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