

**Pandemic COVID19 – Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)  
Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso**

Instructions: To be better prepared, all AgriLife units are required to use this form to complete ad Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to describe how your unit will operate during a Coronavirus pandemic and recover afterwards to be fully operational. This is your plan; feel free to augment this template to meet your needs. The process of planning for an emergency is very valuable. Be collaborative when drafting this and seek comments from your staff and leadership.

Department/Unit: El Paso Center

Developer:

Safety Committee: Dr. Girisha Ganjegunte, Dr. Saurav Kumar, Mike Romero, Luz Waters;

IT: Dong Zhang

Date Plan Finalized: 3/13/2020

Head of Operations: Dr. Zhuping Sheng

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Alt Phone Number: (915) 252-6970

E-Mail Address: zsheng@ag.tamu.edu

**A. Background Information for Pandemic COVID19**

In the event of a COVID19 pandemic, AgriLife will have four objectives:

1. Minimize the risk of pandemic COVID19 to employees.
2. Support employees who may be impacted.
3. Continue essential functions during a pandemic.
4. After the pandemic, resume normal operations as soon as possible.

**Planning Assumptions** - Although no one knows the precise characteristics of the next COVID19 pandemic, AgriLife is basing its plans on the following assumptions:

1. The first pandemic COVID19 outbreaks will occur outside of the U.S. The pandemic's first impact will likely be to employees who are traveling abroad, or plan to do so. WHO, CDC and TAMUS will impose travel restrictions. AgriLife may call some people back and cancel some planned travel. As with SARS and H1N1, international travelers will be subject to restrictions and screening.
2. In the U.S. the pandemic COVID19 wave will last approximately 10 weeks, during which multiple community outbreaks will occur across the country.
3. The first U.S. outbreaks will occur in major metropolitan areas where there is a high rate of international travel.
4. On their own initiative, employees may begin to leave work when the first outbreaks occur.
5. The AgriLife outbreak will last approximately 7 weeks.

**B: El Paso Center Objectives**

Considering your unique mission, describe your unit’s objectives:

- Minimize the risk of pandemic COVID19 to the Center’s faculty and staff.
- Assist and support the Center’s employee impacted.
- Continue to carry out research program activities (via remote access) during a pandemic.
- Maintain field equipment and laboratory instrument in operation.
- Resume normal operations as soon as possible.

**C: Emergency Communication Systems**

All AgriLife employees are responsible for keeping informed of emergencies by monitoring news media reports, the AgriLife homepage and/or through direct notification via e-mail.

Phone: Zhuping Sheng (Main Office) (915) 252-6970; Girisha Ganjegunte (Socorro Farm): (915) (915)497-2962; Luz Water (915) 471-9699; Jimmy Trejo (915) 373-8237.

Call tree:

- (a) Center Director to Faculty, faculty to staff;
- (b) Center Director to Front Office Staff,
- (c) Center Director notify TEEX and Extension (EFNEP and Dairy Marketing), and Natalie Campbell - Master Gardeners Association; Maintenance staff – Sanchez State Prison Facilities Crew.

Email: Rosa I. Talamantes; Dong Zhang

Unit website: Dong Zhang

Other: emergencyep@lists.tamu.edu; Microsoft Team

**D: Emergency Access to Information and Systems**

If access to your unit’s information and systems is essential in an emergency, describe your emergency access plan below. This may include remote access, contacting IT support, off-site data backup, backup files on flash drives, hard copies, alternate e-mail systems, etc.

1. Back up data on laptops and removable storage for off-site/remote work.
2. Set up access to the Center Computers for essential function via VPN (research programs only).
3. Clerical access for shared folders may be done through Office.com/OneDrive.
4. Test and assure single sign-on access from a remote site for time sheet submission and approval as well as payroll process.

**E: El Paso Center’s Essential Functions**

List below your unit’s functions that are essential to operational continuity or recover, and who is responsible for them. Make sure alternates are sufficiently cross trained to assume responsibilities.

Essential Function IT (Communication and Research)  
 Person Responsible (Primary) Dong Zhang Phone: (915)859-911, Ext. 229 and Cell:(915)253-1435 Email: dzhang@ag.tamu.edu  
 Essential Function Laboratory and Greenhouse operations  
 Person Responsible (Primary) Dr. Girisha Ganjegunte Phone: (915)859-1908 Ext.21, Cell:(915)497-2962  
 Person Responsible (Alternate) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Essential Function \_\_\_\_\_

Person Responsible (Primary) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Responsible (Alternate) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**F: El Paso Center's Leadership Succession**

List the people who can make operational decisions if the head of your unit is absent.

Head of Operations Dr. Zhuping Sheng Phone: (915)859-9111, Ext. 226, Cell: 915-252-6970  
First Successors: Dr. Saurav Kumar (915)859-9111, Ext.233, Cell: (703)501-0305 and  
Dr. Girisha Ganjegunte (915)859-1908, Ext. 21, Cell: (915)497-2962 (Socorro)  
Second Successor: Mike Romero Phone: (915) 859-9111, Ext. 225, Cell: (915)241-9282

**G: Key Dependencies**

All units rely on services provided by both internal and external providers. List below the products and services upon which your unit depends and where you acquire them.

Dependency (product or service): Electric / Power  
Internal or External? External  
Provider: El Paso Electric Company Phone 1(800) 592-1634  
Alternate Provider \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dependency (product or service): IT  
Internal or External? External and Internal  
Provider: AT&T Phone 1 (800) 331-0500  
Alternate Provider NONE Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dependency (product or service): Alarm System  
Internal or External? External  
Provider: Tyco/Johnson Controls Security Solutions Phone: 1-800-289-2647, www.tycois.com  
Alternate Provider NONE Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dependency (product or service): Water/Wastewater  
Internal or External? External  
Provider: El Paso Water Utilities Phone (915) 594-5500  
Alternate Provider NONE Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dependency (product or service): Gas  
Internal or External? External  
Provider: TX Gas Services El Paso TX Phone (800) 700-2443  
Alternate Provider NONE Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## H: Mitigation Strategies

Considering your objectives, dependencies and essential functions, describe below the steps you can take now to minimize the pandemic's impact on your operations. For example, you may wish to stock up on your critical supplies or develop contingency work-at-home procedures. This may be the most important step of your emergency planning process. Formulation of your mitigation strategies may require reevaluation of your objective and functions.

Emergency response and notification for COVID19 specifically

Follow the protocol in the procedure and drill exercise as listed in item I.

Contact Health Care Providers for testing and check out.

Send impacted staff home for self-isolation.

IT response

1. Outage of the computer and network system: Dong monitors the status and notifies the Center Director and Faculty for temporary shutdown or outage by text message.
2. Remote access to the computer system at the Center: Research Groups need Center computer resources are granted VPN connection.
3. Single Sign On: test and assure remote access to the single sign-on site.
4. Data Backups: Configure one drive and backup data of your computer for working from remote site.
5. Other computer and network issues: Contact Dong and configure access to computers.

Greenhouse:

If an experiment needs to be continued during the pandemic, the environment control should be set up automatically. If periodic visits are required, special procedures should be developed and proved accordingly.

Field equipment:

All the field monitoring equipment should be configured to collect data automatically during the epidemic.

EFNEP: Visit to schools /staff responses Scheduled classes will be cancelled, and volunteers will be notified by educators. Perishable food items at the facility will be stored in freezer or disposed of by EFNEP staff.

Adm. Function is covered in the current Crisis Management Plan.

Single sign-on, payroll process and purchasing will be configured for remote access and timely processing.

## I: Exercising El Paso Center's Plan and Informing El Paso Center's Staff

Share your completed plan with your staff. Hold exercises to test the plan and maintain awareness. Note below the type of exercises you will use and their scheduled dates.

	Dates:
Staff Meeting	-3/13-
Call Tree Drill	-3/13-
Emergency Communication Test	-3/13-
Offsite Information Access Test	-3/13-
Unscheduled Workday at Home	-3/13-
Emergency Assembly Drill	-3/13-

**J: Recovery After Pandemic**

Describe your plan to fully resume operations as soon as possible after the wave has passed. Identify and address resumption/scheduling of normal activities and services, work backlog, resupply of inventories, continued absenteeism, the use of time off, and emotional needs.

Contact all the staff to confirm their status and plan for returning to work.

Assess work backlog and develop a plan for catching up.

Check the inventory and order supplies as needed.

For the continued absenteeism (staff or care for the family an illness); provide support and assistance to those staff impacted; set up remote access /work from home; backups with temporary staff.

Emotional needs:

*Refer to Employee Assistance Program*

Website: <http://www.guidanceresources.com>

WEBID: TAMUS

Phone: 1-866-301-9623

**K: Special Considerations For El Paso Center**

Describe here an additional or unique consideration that your department may face in a pandemic.

Border Crossing: Staff attendance may be impacted by the border crossing due to a pandemic in the United State and/or Mexico.

Work Study: Mike Romero will notify the UTEP Program Coordinator for the work study students for any changes of their work at the Center or at the remote site.

Visiting Scholar: Faculty advisor will notify the visiting scholar for office lockdown and resumption and will notify the international program and the scholar's family if the visiting scholar/student were impacted.

**L: COOP Submission**

Thank you for completing your unit's Pandemic COVID19 Continuity of Operations Plan. Please submit a copy of this plan to AgriLife Office of Ethics & Compliance, at [risk-compliance@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:risk-compliance@ag.tamu.edu) or to Debra Fincher, Director of Ethics & Compliance at [debra.fincher@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:debra.fincher@ag.tamu.edu) If you have any questions, please call 979-845-7879 or 979-845-4789.