

# Ten Basic Concepts that Occupational Safety and Health Professionals Should Know

## KEY POINT

## WHAT TO KNOW

1	Know the reliable sources of authoritative information when a pandemic occurs.	Do not fall prey to misinformation circulating on web pages and social media. Go straight to the authoritative sources: The World Health Organization (WHO), The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and your local health departments.
2	Listen for the reported modes of transmission.	Is transmission by direct contact, airborne, droplets, or vectors? Are the routes of exposure inhalation, ingestion, or percutaneous? These critical characteristics will drive public health recommendations.
3	Appreciate the importance of the term “novel”.	If a pandemic pathogen is labelled as “novel”, then expect changes in directives as new scientific knowledge is gained.
4	Understand what “ $R_0$ ” or R-naught means.	The $R_0$ value is the expected number of additional cases to stem from a single case with no mitigation measures in place.
5	Anticipate calls for “social distancing”.	Identify congregate settings and consider associated screening protocols such as questionnaires, attestations, and temperature screenings.
6	What is the “environmental persistence” of the pathogen?	This describes how long the infectious agent may be viable on various surface substrates, and this information will help to dictate disinfection and decontamination strategies.
7	What product is deemed to be an effective disinfectant?	The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registers disinfectants that effectively destroy particular infectious agents. Pay close attention to recommended concentrations and contact times for the disinfectant product as well as any associated health risks that the disinfectant product may represent.
8	Monitor for reports of health care workers becoming infected?	If this occurs, it suggests that the practices or protective measures being used in the health care environment offer insufficient protection and need to be adjusted.
9	Anticipate supply chain issues.	Consider stockpiling personal protective equipment (PPE), thermometers, cleaners, disinfectants, and other products needed to maintain business continuity prior to an event. Keep in mind possible expiration dates for some supplies and the need for rotating stocks.
10	Learn more.	Dedicate a portion of regular continuing education efforts towards improving the understanding of how disease transmission occurs and what steps can be taken to interrupt the transmission during a pandemic.