

Influenza – Is your company prepared?

<http://www.flu.gov/>

Actions Employers Should Take Now

- Review or establish a flexible influenza pandemic plan and involve your employees in developing and reviewing your plan;
- Conduct a focused discussion or exercise using your plan, to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or problems that need to be corrected before flu season;
- Have an understanding of your organization's normal seasonal absenteeism rates and know how to monitor your personnel for any unusual increases in absenteeism through the fall and winter.
- Engage state and local health department to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information;

Actions to take now

- Allow sick workers to stay home without fear of losing their jobs;
- Develop other flexible leave policies to allow workers to stay home to care for sick family members or for children if schools dismiss students or child care programs close;
- Share your influenza pandemic plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them;

Actions to take now

- Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts;
- Add a “widget” or “button” to your company Web page or employee Web sites so employees can access the latest information on influenza: www.cdc.gov/widgets/ and www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html

Recommended Action Steps under Current Flu Conditions

- Advise workers to be alert to any signs of fever and any other signs of influenza-like illness [6](#) before reporting to work each day, and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are ill. Employees who are ill should not travel while they are ill.
- CDC recommends that employees with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Recommended Action Steps under Current Flu Conditions

- Expect sick employees to be out for about 3 to 5 days in most cases, even if antiviral medications are used.
- Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with influenza can go to work as usual. However, these employees should monitor their health every day, and notify their supervisor and stay home if they become ill. Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for an ill family member. Employers should be aware that more workers may need to stay at home to care for ill children or other ill family members than is usual.

Sick employees at work should be asked to go home

- **CDC recommends that workers who appear to have an influenza-like illness upon arrival or become ill during the day be promptly separated from other workers and be advised to go home** until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- ***Influenza viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. Provide employee messages on the importance of covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or, in the absence of a tissue, one's sleeve. Place posters in the worksite that encourages cough and sneeze etiquette.***
- ***Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.***

Improve hand hygiene

- Influenza may be spread via contaminated hands. Instruct employees to wash their hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after coughing or sneezing. Place posters in the worksite that encourage hand hygiene.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. If feasible, place hand sanitizers in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.

Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact

- Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended.

Encourage employees to get vaccinated

Encourage your employees to get vaccinated for seasonal influenza. For information on groups prioritized for seasonal influenza vaccines, please see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

H1N1 vaccination

- Encourage your employees also to get vaccinated for 2009 H1N1 influenza when vaccines are available to them. Different groups are prioritized for 2009 H1N1 influenza than for seasonal influenza. For information on groups prioritized for H1N1 influenza vaccine please see the following websites. This information is likely to change as the CDC monitors the situation.
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm>.

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance/>

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