

## PREPARING YOUR EMPLOYEES FOR AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

**Employers should identify the level of risk that employees will have during an influenza pandemic:**

### **Very High Exposure Risk:**

- Are your employees health care workers who will be performing aerosol-generating procedures on known or suspected pandemic influenza patients?
- Are your employees healthcare or laboratory personnel who will be:
  - Collecting or handling laboratory specimens on known or suspected pandemic influenza patients?
  - Manipulating cultures from known or suspected pandemic influenza patients?

### **High Exposure Risk:**

- Will your employees enter patient's rooms to deliver health care or other support services to known or suspected pandemic influenza patients?
- Will your employees provide medical transport to known or suspected pandemic influenza patients in enclosed vehicles?
- Will your employees perform autopsies on known or suspected pandemic influenza patients?

### **Medium Exposure Risk:**

- Are your employees in high-frequency contact with the general population, e.g.:
  - Do they work in schools?
  - Do they work in high-population-density work environments?
  - Are they involved in high-volume retail work?

### **Lower Exposure Risk (Caution):**

- Do your employees have minimal occupational contact with the general public and other coworkers, e.g.:
  - Do they work in offices?
  - Are they employed in occupations that do not require contact with people known to be infected with the pandemic virus, nor frequent close contact (within 6 feet) with the public?

**From: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic  
OSHA 3327-02N 2007**

## PREPARING YOUR EMPLOYEES FOR AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

Minimum steps **ALL** workers and employers should take:

**GOOD HYGIENE** Stockpile items such as soap, tissue, disposable towels, hand sanitizer, and office cleaning supplies. Provide your employees and customers easy access to these infection control supplies. Provide no-touch trash cans.

**CLEANLINESS** Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean.

**COUGH ETIQUETTE** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING** Avoid crowded settings and other situations that increase the risk of exposure. Stay at least six feet away from fellow employees and the general public, as much as possible.

Discourage employees from using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment.

Consider practices to minimize face-to-face contact between other people such as using e-mail, websites and teleconferences. If possible, plan to have some employees work from home.

Reduce or eliminate all unnecessary social interaction. Reconsider all situations that permit or require employees, customers and visitors (including family members) to enter the work place.

**HEALTHY LIFESTYLES** Promote good nutrition and exercise and smoking cessation.

**COMMUNICATION** Monitor public health recommendations about pandemic flu and make sure that all employees have access to this information.

Work with employees to designate a person(s), website, bulletin board or other means of communicating important pandemic flu information.

**GOOD JUDGMENT** Do not come to work when you are sick with influenza-related symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose and muscle aches, so that you will not infect other employees.

Employees who stay home because they are ill should not be penalized. Recognize that employees with ill family members may have to stay home to care for them.

If you are in a **MEDIUM RISK** work environment, follow these additional guidelines:

**WORK PRACTICE AND ENGINEERING CONTROLS** Expand internet, phone-based, drive through window, or home delivery customer service strategies to minimize face-to-face contact.

Communicate the availability of medical screening or other employee health resources (e.g., on-site nurse or employee wellness program to check for flu-like symptoms before employees enter the workplace)

Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards, to protect employees where possible (such as cashier stations).

### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

If you have high-frequency, close contact with the general population, that cannot be eliminated using work practice or engineering controls, and where contact with symptomatic ill persons is not expected, use personal protective equipment, such as:

- Surgical facemask
- Face shield that can be decontaminated

Barrier protection, such as a surgical facemask or face shield, will protect against droplet transmission of an infectious disease.

If you are in a **HIGH OR VERY HIGH RISK** environment, follow these additional guidelines:

OSHA: [http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA\\_pandemic\\_health.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_pandemic_health.pdf)

WVDHHR:

[http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/pan\\_flu/infection\\_control\\_guidelines/Occupational%20Health%20Guidelines\\_%20D50ccup.pdf](http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/pan_flu/infection_control_guidelines/Occupational%20Health%20Guidelines_%20D50ccup.pdf)

**For additional information, see: [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic OSHA 3327-02N 2007](#)**

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