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Preparing for the Flu

(Including 2009 H1N1 Flu)

A Communication Toolkit for Businesses and Employers

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The Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services

Preparing for the Flu:
A Communication Toolkit for Businesses and Employers

The purpose of "Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Businesses and Employers" is to provide information and communication resources to help businesses and employers implement recommendations from CDC's *Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season.*

The toolkit includes:

- **Questions and Answers** about *CDC's Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season*
- **Quick Reference for Business 2009 H1N1 Flu Planning and Response**
- **1 Fact Sheet for Employers**
  - *Actions Steps to Keep Your Business and Employees Healthy*
- **1 Fact Sheet for Employees**
  - *8 Ways You Can Stay Healthy at Work*
- **1 Poster for Workplace Entrances to Remind Sick Employees to Go Home**
  - *STOP! Do You Feel Sick?*
- **3 Template E-mails (or Letters) for Businesses to Send to Employees**
  - *Flu Season is Starting. Get Ready Now!*
  - *If You Are Not Feeling Well*
  - *Staying Healthy*
- **Text Messages for Businesses to Send to Employees**
- **Additional Communication Resources for Businesses to Share with Employees**
- **Additional Web Resources for Businesses to Use for Planning**

Questions and Answers about CDC's *Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009–2010 Influenza Season*

About the Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Q. How does CDC's new flu guidance for businesses differ from the previous business guidance documents?

The new guidance applies to any flu virus circulating during the 2009-2010 flu season, not only 2009 H1N1 flu. It will be very hard to tell if someone who is sick has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu. It offers specific steps for business owners and managers to take to protect workers and to maintain continuity of operations. It provides guidance for the current flu conditions as well as for more severe flu conditions.

This guidance also recommends that, based on current flu conditions, employees with flu-like illness stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). This is a shorter time period than the previous guidance, which recommended that sick people stay home for 7 days after symptoms began. The 7-day period would still be recommended in business settings under more severe flu conditions.

Q. What types of businesses should follow this guidance?

The guidance is intended for businesses of all sizes and types except those that cover healthcare services. People who care for sick people as part of their jobs will need to take additional steps to protect themselves because of their risk at work. Specific guidance for steps health care workers should take for 2009 H1N1 flu can be found at: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinicians/

Rationale for Planning

Q. Why should businesses plan for a flu response?

Businesses may have already been impacted by the spring 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak. Steps can be taken now to slow the spread of flu in the workplace. It is also possible that flu conditions may become more severe, so it is important to plan now for how to respond under those circumstances. An estimated 25% of businesses do not reopen following a major disaster, according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety. A severe flu pandemic could have a major effect on the global economy, including travel, trade, tourism, food, financial markets and other types of businesses. Business planning for pandemic influenza is essential to minimize a pandemic's impact.

Planning from the outset can help protect your business and your employees if flu conditions become more severe. Planning can help

- minimize disruption to business activities,
- protect employees' health and safety, and
- limit the negative impact to the community, economy, and society.

Q. Why should we be concerned about the spread of flu in the workplace?

The workplace may act as a "point of spread," where employees can easily spread flu to their fellow employees as well as to others in the community. The flu can have a major impact on business operations, causing workers to stay home because they are sick or because they need to care for sick family members. They may also need to stay home and take care of their children, if schools dismiss students or childcare programs close. The guidance and this toolkit provide action steps that business owners, managers, and employees can take to minimize the effect of flu in the workplace.

How to Plan and Prepare

Q. What should businesses do to prepare?

- **Review your current pandemic flu plan or develop a new plan.** Involve your employees in development and review of the plan.
  - Conduct an exercise, drill, or discussion to test key components of your plan.
  - Share your plan with employees and explain what policies, leave options, pay, and benefits will be available to them.
- **Engage your state and local health department** to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information.
- **Review sick-leave policies** and consider making them flexible and consistent with public health recommendations. Make sure employees are well-aware of these policies.
- **Try to provide flexible leave policies** to allow workers to stay home to care for sick household members or for children, if schools dismiss students or childcare programs close.
- **Share best practices with other businesses in your community.** Work with companies in your supply chain as well as chambers of commerce and local associations to improve response efforts.
- **Add a "widget" or "button" to your company** Web page or employee Web site so employees can access the latest information on the flu:

  www.cdc.gov/widgets

  www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html

  www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html

  www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia
- **Purchase supplies** such as tissues, soap, and alcohol-based hand cleaners to encourage healthful habits in the workplace.

Q. What should a business include in a pandemic flu plan?

A flu response plan should do the following:

- Provide a variety of measures to protect workers and ensure that business operations can continue.
- Identify essential business functions and critical supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, sub-contractor services/products, and logistics) that are needed to keep your business running. Plan how your business will operate if a high number of employees must stay home or supply chains are interrupted.
- Create policies for flexible sick leave, worksites (e.g., telecommuting), and work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to promote social distancing if flu conditions become more severe.
  - If possible, develop plans for the IT infrastructure needed to support more teleworkers.
  - Consider changing business operations (e.g., possibly changing or closing operations in affected areas) and ways to transfer knowledge to key employees.
- Set up triggers and procedures for starting and ending your pandemic flu response plan. Work closely with your local health officials to identify these triggers.
- Establish a process to communicate information to workers and business partners on your pandemic flu response plans and the latest flu information.

Q. Why should businesses have flexible leave policies or alternate work schedules?

An important way to reduce the spread of flu is to keep sick people away from those who are not sick. Therefore, any worker who has flu-like symptoms should stay home and not come to work. It is possible that employees will need to take care of sick household members or care for children if schools are dismissed or childcare programs are closed. Flexible leave policies and alternate work schedules will help prevent the spread of flu at your workplace, allow employees to continue to work or function while limiting contact with others, help maintain continuity of operations, and help people manage their health and their family's needs.

Steps for Businesses under Current Flu Conditions

Q. What steps can businesses take to keep employees from getting sick?

Businesses should take the following steps to keep employees from getting sick with flu. These steps should be followed ALL the time, not only during a flu outbreak.

- **Advise all employees to stay home if they are sick** until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). They should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, even if they are using antiviral medicines. Businesses should review their policies and practices to consider ways to allow flexibility for employees to stay home when they are sick.

- **Encourage respiratory etiquette** by providing
  - education and reminders about covering coughs and sneezes with tissues, and
  - easy access to tissues and trash cans.

- **Encourage hand hygiene** by providing
  - education and reminders about washing their hands, and
  - easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners.

- **Separate employees who become sick at work from other staff and ask them to go home.**

- **Routinely clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact** with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.

- **Encourage sick employees at higher risk of complications from flu to contact their health care provider as soon as possible.** Taking antiviral medicines early might prevent severe complications from the flu, such as hospitalization or death. People at higher risk for flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes).

- **Prepare for employees to stay home from work and plan ways for essential business functions to continue.** Employees may stay home because they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or because schools have been dismissed and they need to care for their children. Cross-train staff to perform essential functions so that the business can continue operating.
- **Encourage all employees who want protection from flu to get vaccinated for seasonal flu.** Also encourage employees who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications to get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). Review the health benefits you offer your employees and consider including flu vaccination. If possible, you should offer seasonal flu vaccination opportunities at the worksite.
- **Provide information to employees overseas** about what to do if they become sick.

Q. What is the best way to practice good hand hygiene?

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice). Be sure to wash both sides of the hands, between fingers and under the nails. That is the best way to keep your hands from spreading the virus.

Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol are also effective. After applying the hand cleaner, rub hands until dry. If you cannot wash your hands with soap and water and do not have an alcohol-based hand cleaner, other hand cleaners (that do not have alcohol in them) may kill flu germs on hands. There is not as much information about whether these types of hand cleaners are effective.

Q. How long should a sick employee stay home?

Under current flu conditions, employees with flu-like symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

The sick person may decide to stop taking fever-reducing medicines as he or she begins to feel better. This person should continue to monitor his or her temperature until it has been normal for 24 hours.

If flu conditions become more severe, the sick employee should stay home for 7 days. A person who is still sick after 7 days should stay home until 24 hours after their symptoms have gone away.

Sick people should stay at home, except if they need to get medical care, and they should avoid contact with others. Keeping people with a fever at home may reduce the number of people who get infected with the flu virus.

Q. Should household members of sick people stay home, too?

No, an employee with an ill household member may go to work. It is especially important that these employees monitor themselves for illness.

Employees with school-aged children may need to stay home to care for their children. Employers should review leave policies for the flexibility to allow employees to stay home if they need to care for their children or other household members.

If flu conditions are more severe, CDC guidance for school-aged children is that they should stay home for 5 days from the time someone in their home became sick. However, this guidance does not apply to adults.

Q. What are fever-reducing medications?

Fever-reducing medications are medicines that contain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (such as Motrin®). These medicines can be given to people who are sick with flu to help bring their fever down and relieve their pain. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) **should not** be given to children or teenagers (anyone 18 years old and younger) who have flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

Q. Can the flu virus live on surfaces, such as computer keyboards?

Yes, the virus can live on hard objects up to 8 hours. Flu viruses may be spread when a person touches a hard surface (such as a desk or doorknob) or an object (such as a keyboard or pen) where the virus has landed and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Routine cleaning of surfaces will help stop the virus from spreading in this way.

Routinely clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.

Symptoms

Q. How do I know if someone has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu?

It will be very hard to tell if someone who is sick has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu. Public health officials and medical authorities will not be recommending laboratory tests. Anyone who has the symptoms of flu-like illness should stay home and not go to work.

Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Q. How do I recognize a fever or signs of a fever?

A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius). If a sick employee's temperature cannot be taken, look for these possible signs of fever: if he or she feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

People at Higher Risk for Complications

Q. Who is at higher risk for complications from flu?

Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people) and anyone can have serious problems from the flu. However, children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders, or heart disease), and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get complications from the flu.

Q. What should a pregnant employee do to prevent getting sick with flu?

Pregnant women should follow the same guidance as the general public about staying home when sick, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and routine cleaning.

Pregnant women are at higher risk of complications from flu and, like all people at higher risk, should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible if they develop flu-like symptoms. Early treatment with antiviral flu medicines is recommended for pregnant women who

have the flu; these medicines are most effective when started within the first 48 hours of feeling sick.

Pregnant women should know that they are part of the first priority group to receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available. Seasonal flu vaccine is also recommended for pregnant women and can be given at any time during pregnancy.

Steps for Businesses under More Severe Flu Conditions

Q. What additional steps should businesses and employees take if the flu becomes more severe?

In addition to the steps that businesses should be taking all the time to prevent flu, businesses and employees should consider adding the following steps if flu conditions become more severe.

- **Conduct active screening of employees when they arrive at work.** Ask all employees about symptoms during the previous 24 hours. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. Workers who have flu-like symptoms should be asked to go home. Continue to advise workers to check for any signs of illness before coming to work each day.
- **Extend the time sick employees stay home to at least 7 days.** People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away, even if they feel better sooner. Review sick-leave policies and consider making them flexible and consistent with public health recommendations.
- **Try to change work duties, workspace, or work schedules for employees who are at higher risk for flu complications** to reduce the possibility of getting sick at work. If this cannot be done, allow these employees to work from home, or stay home, if feasible. These employees should make this decision in consultation with their health care provider. People at higher risk for flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes).
- **Prepare for employees to stay home from work and plan ways for essential business functions to continue.** Employees may stay home because they are sick, are at higher risk for complications, need to care for sick household members, or because schools have been dismissed or childcare centers have closed and they need to care for their children. Cross-train staff to perform essential functions so that business operations can continue.

- **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in the workplace, if possible.
- **Make contingency plans for increased absenteeism caused by illness.** This could include cross training and hiring temporary workers.
- **Provide guidance to employees who are traveling overseas on what to do if they become sick.** Also provide information about possible travel delays, health screenings, and other activities targeted towards travelers leaving other countries for the United States. Health information for travelers can be found at www.cdc.gov/travel.

Q. What can businesses do to increase social distance during a more severe flu outbreak?

Employers should think creatively about ways to increase the space between people, while still keeping the business operating. Some options for social distancing are:

- cancelling non-essential face-to-face meetings and trying conference calls or Internet-based meetings instead,
- cancelling non-essential business travel,
- spacing workers farther apart in the workplace,
- allowing flexible work hours so fewer workers will be in the workplace at the same time, and
- offering telework options for employees.

Q. How will businesses know if the flu is more severe and they should consider taking additional action steps?

CDC and its partners will continue to monitor the spread of flu, the severity of the illness it's causing, and whether the virus is changing. State and local health departments will also be on the lookout for increases in severe illness in their areas and will provide guidance to their communities. Businesses should work closely with state and local public health officials to guide their flu response. Public health agencies will communicate changes in severity and the extent of flu-like illness to ensure that businesses have the information they need to choose the right steps to reduce the impact of flu.

Quick Reference

Quick Reference for Businesses and Employers 2009-2010 Influenza Season Planning and Response

Local flu conditions will influence the decisions that local public health officials will make regarding community-level strategies to lessen the spread of flu. Know where to get timely and accurate information that can guide your responses in each location where your operations reside. Be prepared to use multiple measures to protect workers and ensure continuity of business operations.

Recommended Action Steps under Current Flu Conditions (similar severity as in Spring/Summer 2009)

Sick employees should stay home.

People with symptoms of flu-like illness[1] should stay home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever.[2]

Sick employees at work should be sent home.

Employees who appear to have a flu-like illness upon arrival or become sick during the work day should be promptly separated from others and sent home.

Encourage your employees to wash their hands often.

Instruct employees to wash their hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after coughing or sneezing.

Encourage your employees to cover their coughs and sneezes.

Communicate the importance of covering coughs and sneezes and provide tissues and no-touch wastebaskets.

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

Clean surfaces that are frequently touched with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.

Encourage employees to get vaccinated.

Encourage employees to get vaccinated for seasonal flu and employees at higher risk for flu complications to get vaccinated for 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available to them.[3]

[1]Symptoms of influenza-like illness include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

[2]Fever is usually described as 100°F [37.8°C] or greater.

[3]For information on groups prioritized for seasonal flu vaccines see www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm. Different groups are prioritized for 2009 H1N1 flu, for more information see www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.

Protect employees who are at higher risk for complications of flu.

Employees at higher risk for complications of flu, like pregnant women and people with certain chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and asthma, should check with their health care provider promptly, if they become sick. Encourage these employees to get vaccinated for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu as recommended when vaccines are available. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at higher risk for flu complications because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths.

Prepare for increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members and plan ways for essential business functions to continue.

Cross-train staff to perform essential functions so that business operations can continue.

Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps.

Advise workers to check for signs of flu-like illness before traveling, to notify their supervisor, and stay home if they are sick. Tell employees who are traveling how to seek health care if they become sick and need care. If employees become sick during travel, they should stay in their hotel room unless they are seeking medical care.

Prepare for the possibility of school dismissals or temporary closure of child care programs.

Allow workers to stay home to take care of their children if schools are dismissed or child care programs are closed. Encourage your employees with children to plan for child care alternatives if possible.

Additional Action Steps to Consider Under Conditions of Increased Severity (compared to Spring/Summer 2009)

If flu conditions become more severe than that of spring/summer 2009, there may be even higher employee absenteeism and a need to add additional protective measures. Consider the following measures if flu conditions are more severe and use them along with the action steps above.

Consider active screening of employees who report to work.

At the beginning of the workday or the beginning of each shift, ask all employees about flu-like symptoms[1] and those with symptoms should be asked to go home.

Consider alternative work environments for employees at higher risk for complications of flu during periods of increased flu activity in the community.

When possible, change work duties, work location, or work schedules for employees who are at higher risk for flu complications to reduce the number of exposures to people that may have flu. If this cannot be done, allow these employees to work from home or stay home, if feasible.

Increase social distancing in the workplace.

Avoid crowded work settings, cancel large business-related face-to-face meetings, space workers farther apart, cancel non-essential travel, promote teleworking, and use staggered shifts to have fewer workers in the workplace at the same time.

Advise employees about possible disruptions and special considerations while traveling overseas.

Travel restrictions may be enacted by some countries, which may limit the ability of employees to return home if they become sick while traveling. Plan ahead to limit non-essential travel and create contingency plans for employees on international travel.

Prepare for school dismissal or closure of child care programs.

School dismissals and closure of child care programs are more likely when flu conditions are more severe. Be prepared to allow workers to stay home to care for their children if schools are dismissed or child care programs are closed.

Other considerations.

Employers should be aware that the severity of 2009 H1N1 flu could change rapidly and local public health recommendations to communities and businesses could be revised quickly. Planners should identify sources of timely and accurate information so that they are aware of changes to recommendations and can promptly implement revised or additional measures.

Fact Sheet for Employers

Action Steps to Keep Your Business and Employees Healthy

Regardless of the size or type of your business, planning and taking action *now* can help protect your business and employees from the flu.

Plan Now

- ***Review your current pandemic flu plan or develop a new plan.*** Involve your employees in development and review of the plan. Share the plan and polices with your employees.
- ***Engage your state and local health department*** to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information.
- ***Consider ways to allow sick employees to stay home*** without fear of losing their jobs.
- ***Develop flexible leave policies*** to allow employees to stay home to care for sick family members or for children, if schools dismiss students or childcare programs close.
- ***Share best practices with other businesses in your community.*** Work with companies in your supply chain as well as chambers of commerce and local associations to improve response efforts.
- ***Add a "widget" or "button" to your company*** Web page or employee Web site so employees can access the latest information on the flu:
  - www.cdc.gov/widgets
  - www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html
  - www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html
  - www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia
- ***Purchase supplies*** such as tissues, soap, and alcohol-based hand cleaners to encourage healthful habits in the workplace.
- ***Plan for how business can continue if many employees must stay home.*** Designate and train other employees in the event someone becomes sick to make sure you can continue your critical functions.

Take Steps Now

Take steps now and continue during the flu season to help protect the health of your employees.

- ***Advise all employees to stay home if they are sick*** until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). Make sure fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- ***Employees who get sick at work should go home as soon as possible.*** If the employee cannot go home immediately, he or she should be separated from other employees.

- ***Encourage sick employees at higher risk of complications from flu to contact their health care provider as soon as possible.*** Taking antiviral medicines early might prevent severe complications from the flu, such as hospitalization or death.
- ***Encourage all employees who want protection from flu to get vaccinated for seasonal flu.*** Also encourage employees who are at higher risk for complications from 2009 H1N1 flu to receive the vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccinations, visit www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/acip.htm
- ***Provide resources and a work environment that promotes hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.*** Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, and alcohol-based hand cleaner. Offer education on hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes in an easy-to-understand format and in appropriate languages. Go to www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/toolkit.html to find tools businesses can use.
- ***Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact*** with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.
- ***Provide information to employees overseas*** about what to do if they become sick.

Take Additional Steps if Flu Conditions are More Severe

The flu may become more severe and additional steps may be necessary to slow the spread of flu and maintain a healthy workforce.

- ***Conduct active screening of employees when they arrive at work.*** Ask all employees about symptoms such as fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, and sore throat during the previous 24 hours. Employees who have flu-like symptoms should be asked to go home. Continue to advise employees to check for any signs of illness before coming to work each day.
- ***Extend the time sick employees stay home to at least 7 days.*** People who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away, even if they feel better sooner.
- ***Try to change work duties, workspace, or work schedules for employees who are at higher risk for flu complications*** to reduce the possibility of getting sick at work. If this cannot be done, allow these employees to work from home, or stay home if feasible.
- ***Plan to minimize face-to-face contact between employees.*** Consider strategies, such as using e-mail, Web sites, and teleconferences, canceling large meetings and gatherings, and encouraging flexible work arrangements (telecommuting or flexible work hours) to reduce the number of employees who must be at the work site at the same time or in one specific location.
- ***Provide guidance to employees who are traveling overseas on what to do if they become sick.*** Also provide information about possible travel delays, health screenings, and other activities targeted towards travelers.

For more information:

- **Visit: www.flu.gov**
- **Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day**
  - 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)
  - TTY: (888) 232-6348
  - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Fact Sheet for Employees

8 Ways You Can Stay Healthy at Work

You can protect yourself and others by following these key action steps.

1. ***Maintain a healthy lifestyle*** through rest, diet, exercise, and relaxation.

2. ***Wash your hands frequently*** with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. Be sure to wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

3. ***Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.*** Germs spread this way.

4. ***Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue,*** or cough and sneeze into your elbow. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.

5. ***Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean,*** such as telephones, computer keyboards, doorknobs, etc.

6. ***Do not use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment.*** If you need to use a co-worker's phone, desk, or other equipment, clean it first.

7. ***Don't spread the flu! If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home.*** Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. CDC recommends that sick workers stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

8. ***Get vaccinated against seasonal flu, when vaccine is available in your area.*** If you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications you should receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/acip.htm

For more information:

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  - TTY: (888) 232-6348
  - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Stop! Do You Feel Sick?
Poster

Do you feel sick?

You may have the flu if you have fever or chills
AND
a cough or sore throat

You may also have a runny nose, body aches, a headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting

If you think you have the flu, tell your supervisor and stay home, except to get medical care.

For more information visit www.flu.gov or call 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636)

CS206260-B

Template E-mails for Businesses to Send to Employees

Flu Season is Starting. Get Ready Now!

- *Coordinate efforts with your local health department before distributing this letter or e-mail communication to ensure that all information is timely, relevant, and accurate.*
- *Visit www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/toolkit.html to download and customize a Microsoft Word version of this letter and to view more flu information to share with employees.*
- *Consider customizing by using your business stationery or e-mail template, inserting a name and contact information of someone employees can reach for flu questions, adding the signature line of the owner, president, etc.*

Flu season is starting. Get ready now!

The flu season is starting and will last through the fall and winter. More than one kind of flu virus will be spreading this season, including seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu. If you get the flu, you can get sick and can spread the flu to others at home, at work, and in the community. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

We are asking that you plan to stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

Also remember to cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. If a severe flu outbreak hits our community, we will take additional steps to avoid spreading the flu virus in the workplace.

You need to prepare as well.

- Review our pandemic flu response plan. *[provide information on how/where to do this]*
- Get the vaccine for seasonal flu *[insert information about vaccination clinics at the workplace or other ways your business can support getting vaccinated for seasonal flu]*
- Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, **if** you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccinations, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.
- Make plans to care for sick household members or for children if schools dismiss students or child care programs close.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home. Have the following items on hand: a supply of fever-reducing medicines that contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen, alcohol-based hand cleaners, tissues, and other items that may be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick.
- Learn about the flu and what you can do. To find out more about preparing for the flu, go to www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

If you have any questions about policies or action steps we can take, please contact *[insert name and contact information here].*

By working together, we can protect our workforce while having a productive fall and winter.

If You Are Not Feeling Well . . .

- *Coordinate efforts with your local health department before distributing this letter or e-mail communication to ensure that all information is timely, relevant, and accurate.*
- *Visit www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/toolkit.html to download and customize a Microsoft Word version of this letter and to view more flu information to share with employees.*
- *Consider customizing by using your business stationery or e-mail template, inserting a name and contact information of someone employees can reach for flu questions, adding the signature line of the owner, president, etc.*

If you are not feeling well . . .

Do you have a fever or chills AND a cough or sore throat?

If "yes," you may have the flu. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Please do NOT come to work if you are sick with a fever AND cough or sore throat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that sick employees stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu and you are sick, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders, or heart disease), and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get complications from the flu. Your health care provider may prescribe antiviral drugs, and they are most effective when started within 2 days of getting sick.

In addition, emergency warning signs that the sick person needs **urgent medical attention** include

- *Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath*
- *Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen*
- *Sudden dizziness*
- *Confusion*
- *Severe or persistent vomiting*
- *Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough*

Contact *[insert name, telephone, e-mail]* if you have any questions.

For more information about caring for someone sick with flu, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm

For more information visit www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

Staying Healthy . . .

- *Coordinate efforts with your local health department before distributing this letter or e-mail communication to ensure that all information is timely, relevant, and accurate.*
- *Visit www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/toolkit.html to and customize a Microsoft Word version of this letter and to view more flu information to share with employees.*
- *Consider customizing by using your business stationery or e-mail template, inserting a name and contact information of someone employees can reach for flu questions, adding the signature line of the owner, president, etc.*

Staying healthy . . .

Important Actions to Take to Stay Healthy

- Every time you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze.
    - Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
    - Use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not available.
    - Wash your hands before and after preparing food or eating, after using the restroom, before and after touching your nose, eyes, or mouth, and after touching items that may have been exposed to bodily fluids
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get vaccinated for seasonal flu. For more information about seasonal flu vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm. *[insert information about vaccination clinics at the workplace or other ways your business can support getting vaccinated].*
- Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, **if** you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm
- If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu, talk to your doctor about what you will need to do if you get sick. People at higher risk for flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes).

Contact *[insert name, telephone, e-mail]* if you have any questions.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

Text Messages for Businesses to Send to Employees

Text Messages for Businesses to Send to Employees

The following messages can be sent from businesses to employees through cell phone text messaging, Twitter, Facebook, and other social network channels.

Prevention	Wash hands often or use alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after you cough or sneeze. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
If You Are Sick	If you're sick with a fever AND a cough or sore throat, don't come to work. Please call your supervisor to tell them you are sick. If you're sick, stay home for at least 24 hrs after your fever has gone away. If you are sick and are at higher risk for complications from flu or concerned about your illness, call your health care provider for advice.
Symptoms	You may have the flu if you have fever or chills AND a cough or sore throat. What to Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms http://bit.ly/hvsaS
More Flu Information	Get important 2009 H1N1 flu info from the mobile CDC Website at http://m.cdc.gov 2009 H1N1 Flu and You. Q&A from CDC www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm

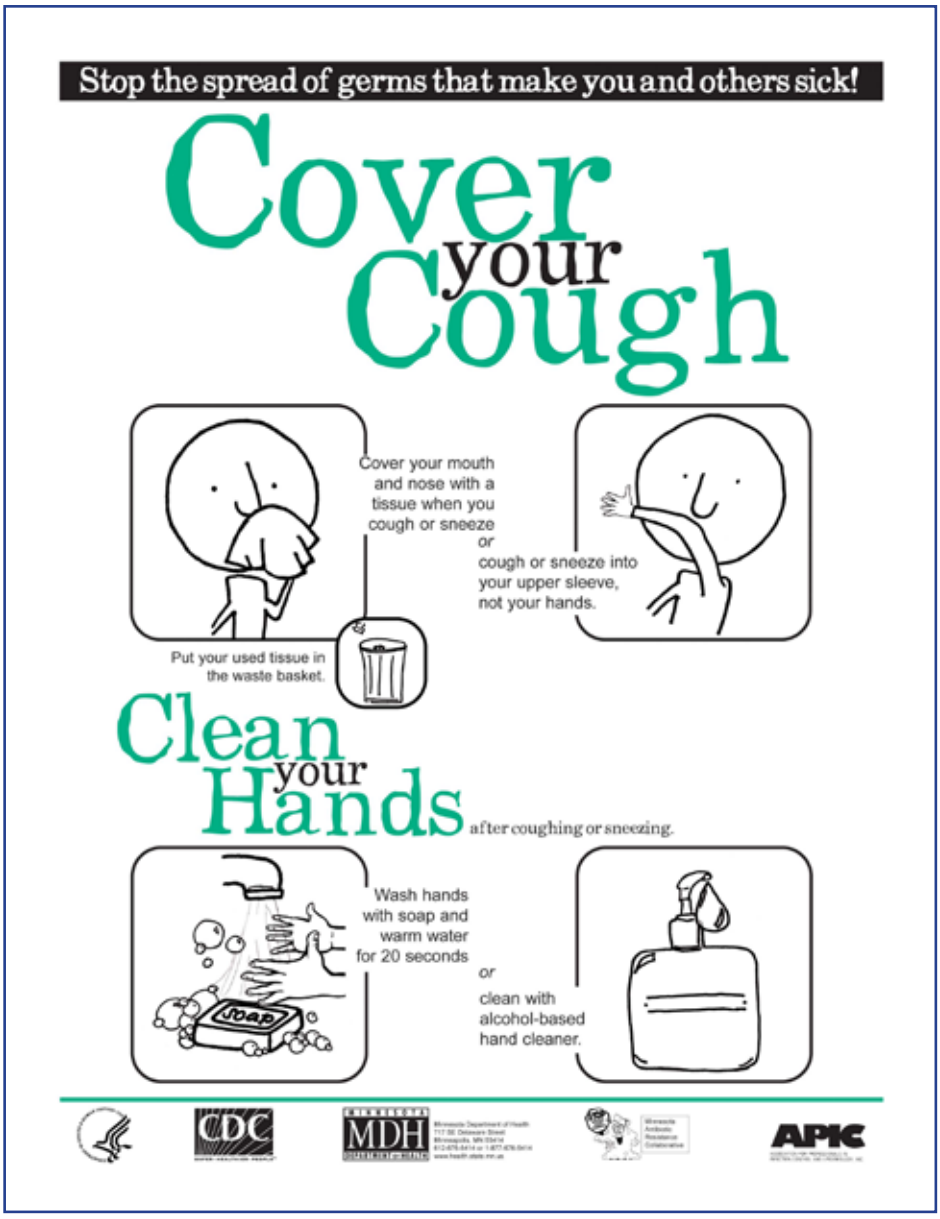
Additional Communication Resources

Additional Communication Resources for Businesses to Share with Employees

CDC Posters about Flu Prevention for Businesses

Use the following posters and fact sheets in your offices, hallways, and around the buildings to educate employees about ways to prevent the spread of flu.

www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm (available in different sizes and languages)



Other Posters about Flu Prevention for Businesses

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/materials (includes other posters, brochures, buttons, stickers, and other materials)

CDC Fact Sheets and Other Materials about Flu Prevention for Employees

Stopping the Spread of Germs at Work

www.cdc.gov/germstopper/work.htm (available in English and other languages)

Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm (available in English and other languages)

2009 H1N1 Flu: Flyers & Other Print Materials

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/flyers.htm (includes brochures, flyers, fact sheets, and other materials about 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal flu)

Widgets

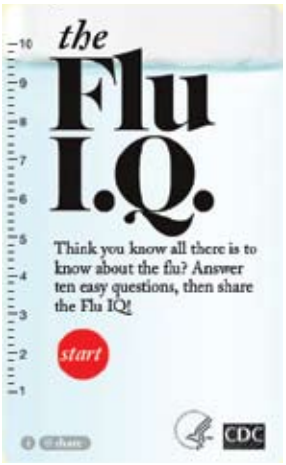
A widget is an application that displays the featured content directly on your Web page. Once you've added the widget to your Web site, there's no maintenance. When CDC.gov updates content, your site will be updated automatically. You will have up-to-date, credible health information on your Web page.

You can easily add a CDC widget to your Web page. Use CDC widgets to keep your employees informed about flu. When your employees click on the widget, your Web page displays the featured, up-to-date content.

CDC's flu widgets are available at www.cdc.gov/widgets. For more CDC social media tools, go to: www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/h1n1.

Flu.gov widgets are available at www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html. For more Flu.gov social media tools, go to www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia.

Sample Widgets



Additional Web Resources

Additional Web Resources for Businesses to Use for Planning

- ***2009 H1N1 Flu Resources for Businesses and Employers***
  www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business
- ***Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Flu Web Site for Businesses***
  www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/pandemicflu/index.html
  Hotline: 1-800-321-OSHA
- ***What Employers Can Do to Protect Workers from Pandemic Influenza (OSHA)***
  www.osha.gov/Publications/employers-protect-workers-flu-factsheet.html
- ***Healthcare Workplaces Classified as Very High or High Exposure Risk for Pandemic Influenza***
  www.osha.gov/Publications/exposure-risk-classification-factsheet.html
- ***Considerations for Antiviral Drug Stockpiling by Employers in Preparation for an Influenza Pandemic***
  www.flu.gov/vaccine/antiviral_employers.html
- ***Workplace Questions***
  www.flu.gov/faq/workplace_questions
- ***Community Mitigation Measures***
  www.flu.gov/plan/community/commitigation.html
- ***Occupational Health Issues Associated with H1N1 Flu***
  www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/h1n1flu
- ***Disaster Assistance and Recovery Resources***
  www.asbdc-us.org/Resources/Disaster.html
- ***Central Repository of Federal Disaster Assistance***
  www.disasterassistance.gov
- ***Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Preparedness Page***
  www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/disasterpreparedness/index.html
- ***Business Emergency Plan Resources***
  www.ready.gov/business
- ***Information on 2009 H1N1 Flu***
  www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu
- ***Information on Seasonal Flu***
  www.cdc.gov/flu