

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GUIDELINES FOR ACTIONS REQUIRED DURING PANDEMIC SITUATION RELATED TO NOVEL INFLUENZA A H1N1 – October 1, 2009</b></p>
---

### **Actions to Prepare for Impact and Minimize Risk Related to the H1N1 Flu**

There are immediate steps that managers and supervisors can take to reduce the risk of the spread of the H1N1 flu in the workplace:

- Encourage employees to wash their hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Communicate the importance of covering coughs and sneezes, and provide tissues and no-touch wastebaskets.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- Encourage employees to get vaccinated for seasonal flu, and suggest that employees at higher risk for flu complications get vaccinated for H1N1 flu when vaccines are available to them.
- 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 to check for signs of flu-like illness before traveling, to notify their supervisor, and stay home if they are sick. If employees become sick during travel, they should be instructed to stay in their hotel room until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours, unless they are seeking medical care.

### **Recognizing H1N1 Flu Symptoms**

If an employee or a supervisor suspects that an employee is experiencing the symptoms associated with H1N1 flu, quick action is required to avoid the spread of the virus to others in the workplace. This is a highly contagious disease that is spread from person to person. Some of the observable symptoms include, without limitation:

- Indication of a fever greater than 100° (flushed, pale or sweaty face)
- Productive, deep, prolonged cough
- Sore throat (frequent clearing of throat, using throat lozenges)
- Runny nose (frequent use of tissues to blow nose or unusually red nose)
- Nasal congestion (frequent use of tissues, obvious nasal secretions)
- Body aches (verbal complaints of body aches, pains, sore to touch)
- Headache (sensitivity to light or rubbing forehead)
- Chills (shivering when it is not cold)
- General appearance or outward signs of malaise/fatigue
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (frequent trips to the bathroom)

### **Stopping the Spread of the H1N1 Flu – Employee Responsibilities**

Employees are expected to act responsibly, exercise good judgment, and stay home from work if they are experiencing symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu. Employees should request sick leave, vacation leave, or their personal holiday when they are experiencing symptoms and they must not return to work until they have been free from fever for more than 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication. If an employee begins to experience symptoms at work, or if he/she reasonably believes another employee may be experiencing the symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu, the employee should immediately notify his/her supervisor.

## **Stopping the Spread of the H1N1 Flu – Supervisor Responsibilities**

If an employee reports for duty and is not fit to perform his/her duties, or if there is a risk of spreading the virus to others in the workplace, the supervisor must encourage the employee to return home. In making the determination as to whether it is appropriate to send the employee home, the following guidance is provided.

A direct statement by the employee, or observations reported by another employee that the employee is experiencing symptoms associated with H1N1, should be given credence. If a supervisor reasonably believes that an employee may be experiencing the symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu, the supervisor should consult with the employee to encourage the employee to immediately leave the workplace and return home to convalesce. If the employee refuses, the supervisor should consult with his/her manager and articulate the observable symptoms.

The employee may use sick leave, vacation leave or personal holiday leave for this absence. In the rare instance where the employee has used all accrued leave and no paid leave time is available, the employee should still stay at home to avoid the spread of H1N1 flu in the workplace. The employee may make application to the Department/Agency Head for paid leave, which application will be given due consideration in the circumstances.

To avoid overwhelming health care providers and to avoid the spread H1N1 flu through otherwise unnecessary visits to a health care provider, Departments/Agencies are asked to temporarily suspend internal departmental policies requiring employees to provide a physician's note upon return to work if the absence is due to the H1N1 flu. Alternatively, a return-to-work statement signed by the employee indicating that the employee has been fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours will be sufficient for permitting the employee to return to work.

In cases where the employee appears to be experiencing the symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu but refuses to leave the workplace, the supervisor or his/her manager should contact the Department of Human Resources to determine the appropriate action.

## **Leave That May be Eligible for FMLA**

Depending upon the severity of the condition, the amount of time missed from work, and the need for medical care, leave may qualify to be classified as FMLA. If this occurs, the employee is not required to submit a medical certification for leave related to H1N1 flu. Additionally, the employee is not required to obtain a return-to-work certification from a health care provider following a FMLA absence for H1N1 flu. A return-to-work statement signed by the employee indicating that the employee reasonably believed that they had contracted H1N1 flu and further stating that they have been symptom free and fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours will be sufficient for permitting the employee to return to work.

## **Family Members Experiencing H1N1 Flu**

If an employee has a child, spouse or other family member with H1N1 flu and the employee is not personally experiencing any of the H1N1 symptoms, the employee should use his/her own judgment regarding the need to stay home to care for the dependent or family member. However, there is no need to require the removal of the employee from the workplace and there is no need to notify coworkers, consumers or customers.