

## ***Urgent Special Report***

# **Swine Flu Pandemic: What You Must Know & Do NOW to Protect Your Employees & Your Company.**

- ✳ Critical Steps to take now to protect your employees from the H1N1 swine flu virus
- ✳ What you must know about Federal and Provincial law to protect your company from liability
- ✳ Ready-to-use Preparedness Planning Checklist to help you organize your pandemic planning
- ✳ Plus, a FREE Safety Talk! to help your employees stay healthy and safe -- in both print and downloadable formats

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# Urgent Special Report

## Swine Flu Pandemic: What You Must Know & Do NOW to Protect Your Employees & Your Company.

### INTRODUCTION

It's official. On June 11, the World Health Organization declared that the H1N1 virus (which we'll refer to in this report as "swine flu") outbreak has become a pandemic. So now what? If you're an employer in Canada, this Special Report will attempt to provide some answers. To start out, here's a word of advice. *Take this threat seriously.*

This isn't another Y2K or hyped up media scare. The danger of pandemic influenza is real. People have already died from the swine flu. Regrettably, more deaths are expected, especially in the fall and winter when the virus is predicted to make a resurgence—and in a far more virulent form. Of course, the threat to human life is the most worrisome aspect of the crisis. But there's another dimension: the potential impact of pandemic influenza on your workplace and business.

### The Purpose of this Special Report

The Internet contains more free information about the swine flu and the general threat of pandemic than the average human being could be expected to absorb in a lifetime. We don't intend to waste your time regurgitating that information. We wrote this Special Report not to educate you about pandemic influenza but to show you what to do about it. Specifically, this *Insider* Special Report will provide answers to the two key questions:

1. What are your legal obligations to protect workers and others in your workplace?
2. What practical steps must you take to manage those liability risks?

### I. WHAT ARE YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS?

Protecting workers from swine flu is an obligation under the law:

#### 1. OHS LAWS

The obligation to protect against swine flu is implied under the "general duty" clause contained within each province's OHS act, which requires employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace and take measures to prevent foreseeable risks that aren't specifically mentioned in the regulations. When outbreaks of infectious diseases occur, the risk of contracting and spreading the disease becomes foreseeable and is thus covered by the general duty clause. Government authorities in many parts of Canada have issued guidelines confirming this view.

#### 2. NEGLIGENCE LAW

Negligence law is essentially the "general duty" clause of everyday

life. It requires everyone to use "reasonable care" to protect others affected by their acts (and omissions) from foreseeable risks. And it would be hard for employers to argue that the risk of swine flu isn't foreseeable.

### II. MANAGING LIABILITY RISKS

Guidelines issued by governments in BC, MB, ON, SK and other provinces offer valuable guidance on what to do—not just in those particular provinces but in all parts of Canada where the guidelines represent best practices.

#### 1. DUTY TO EDUCATE

Employers must familiarize workers of the risk posed by the particular illness, including what it is, how it can infect them and how to protect themselves. The guidelines also say you must acquaint your workers with personal hygiene and other measures for guarding against the risk of infection, including:

- ✿ Hand washing;
- ✿ "Cough etiquette";
- ✿ Social distancing;
- ✿ Proper use of PPE;
- ✿ Vaccination; and
- ✿ Precautions for workers planning to travel to affected areas.

Education also involves keeping your workers apprised of recent developments, both public and within your workplace. For example, you could post updates on your company website and/or start an internal phone service that workers can call for information. Also, post the location of hospitals, clinics, public health authorities and other health resources in your community. In addition, you must establish and maintain communication with workers who are absent due to infection.

#### 2. DUTY TO PREVENT WORKPLACE INFECTION

The heart of the employer's duty is to implement infection countermeasures. A key to do this is to implement an "exposure control plan" that provides for:

- ✿ Implementing basic hygiene measures, such as providing soap, anti-bacterial products and paper towels and keeping sinks and surfaces that people touch, e.g., door knobs, clean;
- ✿ Posting signs, posters and notices reminding workers to wash their hands properly, use cough etiquette, keep social distances, etc.
- ✿ Adopting work practices that promote social distance, for example, using conference calls instead of face-to-face meetings;
- ✿ Adopting design measures, such as keeping workstations as far apart as possible;

- ✳ Screening workers and visitors entering the workplace for signs of influenza;
- ✳ Providing workers with protective gloves, surgical masks and other PPE; and
- ✳ Managing cases of infection at work, including telling those suspected of having influenza to go home immediately and monitoring which workers get infected, where they work, etc.

Exposure control plans are mandatory in BC and they're a best practice everywhere else. There's a Model Exposure Control Plan at the end of this Special Report that you can adapt.

### III. PREPAREDNESS PLANNING CHECKLIST

#### OBJECTIVE #1: GETTING ORGANIZED

**Step #1:** Pick an already existing committee or assemble a new group that includes the safety coordinator, the person in charge of emergency planning (if that person isn't the safety coordinator) and somebody familiar with labour issues. You should involve the JHSC as part of the planning process.

**Step #2:** Appoint a senior management official to head the planning team.

**Step #3:** Establish contacts to monitor workers' health in each business unit.

**Step #4:** Establish a contact to stay in touch with the provincial Ministry of Health and other reliable public sources of information about the influenza situation in Canada, your province and your community.

#### OBJECTIVE #2: ASSESS RISKS

**Step #1:** Gauge the vulnerability of each business unit, operation and facility. For example, are there certain facilities of your company that the Ministry of Health might order shut down during a pandemic?

**Step #2:** Gauge the vulnerability of your business if influenza threatened the viability of any unit, operation and facility. Think of ways—such as opening an alternate facility—to keep operations going with minimal disruption in response to problems that may arise.

**Step #3:** Consider what role, if any, the government might call on you to play during a crisis. For example, might the government take over parts of your workforce or facility to perform emergency services?

#### OBJECTIVE #3: PROTECT YOUR WORKERS' HEALTH

This objective includes the education and infection control measures described in Section II.

#### OBJECTIVE #4: ADJUST YOUR HR POLICIES

Your current employment policies might not be suitable to address problems that can arise during a pandemic. So you might need to

adjust your policies and/or create new ones. Here are some of the issues to cover:

#### A. Disability Discrimination Risks for Quarantines

Workers who contract illnesses are likely to be considered disabled under human rights laws. So, policies that let you force sick workers to leave work or deny them access to the workplace could lead to discrimination lawsuits. So make sure that policies allowing for social distancing or quarantining are consistently enforced and based on objective criteria.

**Model Language:** As a temporary measure to prevent infectious illnesses from spreading to other individuals in the workplace, the employer may initiate measures to quarantine employees who display actual symptoms of an infectious and contagious illness, or whom the employer has reasonable grounds to believe pose a risk of spreading such illnesses. "Reasonable grounds" shall include, but not be limited to, situations where the employee cared for or was otherwise exposed to a person with the illness.

#### B. Disability Discrimination for Not Accommodating Long Absences

Tolerating long absences is part and parcel of the duty to accommodate the worker's disability to the point of undue hardship. But you don't have to hold the job open forever. The question of how long an absence can last before undue hardship is reached varies based on the nature of the position, the worker's prognosis and other factors.

#### C. Privacy Violations for Obtaining Workers' Medical Information

If you're federally regulated or subject to the laws of province that has its own privacy law, e.g., AB, BC and QC, you can't collect, use or disclose a worker's private health information without consent. Exceptions apply when the employer needs the information to carry out legitimate business functions, such as to verify a worker's eligibility for disability benefits or unpaid leave. But the exception covers only the minimum information necessary to perform the function. Unfortunately, the lines between what information you can and can't ask for without consent are fuzzy. That's why you should ask workers to consent before getting their information.

#### D. Improperly Disciplining Workers for Refusing Work

Workers have tried invoking their OHS right to refuse work to avoid jobs involving the risk of infectious disease, most notably during the SARS outbreak. For example, in 2003, an airport customs agent refused to handle travelers from Asia without wearing a surgical mask and gloves [Chapman and Canada (Customs and Revenue Agency)]. Two years later, a government immigration official engaged in a similar refusal [Caverly and Canada (Human Resources Development)]. In each case, the arbitrator ruled that the refusal was unjustified because the employee's fear of contracting SARS was unreasonable. However, the question of whether the right of refusal applies to infectious disease is far from settled.

## E. Other HR Issues to Watch Out for

- ✦ Is the company's use of temporary workers to replace absent workers permissible under the terms of the collective agreement?
- ✦ Do arrangements that require workers to put in longer hours to make up for labour shortfalls comply with maximum hours restrictions under the employment standards law?
- ✦ Are workers getting all the overtime they're entitled to for the extra hours they're working?
- ✦ Are workers entitled to unpaid leave if they contract the illness or take off work to care for a family member who becomes ill?
- ✦ Can you discipline workers for failing to follow hygiene or infection control guidelines?
- ✦ Are workers who are ill or quarantined entitled to disability, workers' compensation and other benefits?

### OBJECTIVE #5: PLAN TO KEEP BUSINESS RUNNING

**Step #1:** List crucial business functions that pandemic influenza might disrupt. Determine which functions are a priority to maintain and which you can do without, if necessary.

**Step #2:** Identify the skills and personnel needed to keep the priority functions running.

**Step #3:** Look for alternative sources to replace the skills and personnel associated with such functions on a short-term basis. First, consider sources from within your organization, such as the retraining and reassigning of existing workers and bringing retirees back to work. If you need to go outside the organization, make sure you have access to employment agencies and other sources of replacement labour. And in either case, make sure you have the infrastructure to train and absorb replacement/reassigned workers.

**Step #4:** In lieu of or in conjunction with Step 3, develop a plan to modify, reduce or halt specific functions—or even close the business temporarily—to cope with the impact of a pandemic-related disruption.

**Step #5:** Establish an organizational structure to coordinate the emergency response and continuity of operations.

### OBJECTIVE #6: PREPARE FOR SERVICE & SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS

**Step #1:** List all outside suppliers of critical goods, materials and services to your organization.

**Step #2:** Identify alternative sources for those goods and services and/or start building (or adding to existing) stockpiles and reserves.

**Step #3:** Make sure your business has access to contingency funds so it can meet payroll, pay its contractors and meet other critical financial obligations.

### OBJECTIVE #7: PREPARE FOR ABSENCES

**Step #1:** Determine the minimum staff you need to maintain critical business functions.

**Step #2:** Identify the credentials workers need to fill those functions, such as licences to operate heavy machinery.

**Step #3:** Start looking for sources of labour to meet those needs. Again, consider both internal—bringing back retirees or retraining existing workers—and external sources.

**Step #4:** Make sure you have an infrastructure to train and support replacement workers.

### OBJECTIVE #8: ESTABLISH LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH WORKERS

Develop the means to communicate with your workforce in case of a pandemic. Make sure you have a system for briefing workers as to developments, both public and within your workplace. You also need to establish a method for remaining in contact with workers who fall ill or take absences to care for others.

### OBJECTIVE #9: ESTABLISH LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

During an influenza outbreak, each business will need to maintain communication with certain key customers, partners, suppliers and other business relations. Make sure you know who those key relations are to your own business and establish secure means of communicating with them.

### OBJECTIVE #10: PREPARE A PLAN

**Step #1:** The planning team should prepare a draft plan documenting your planning efforts and listing the results of all planning decisions undertaken in pursuit of Objectives 1 through 9.

**Step #2:** Give the draft to senior managers, business unit leaders and the JHSC or worker representative for internal review.

**Step #3:** Give the draft to key suppliers, customers, partners and local government and health officials for external review.

**Step #4:** Adopt appropriate changes in response to each review.

**Step #5:** Acquaint workers and management with the details of the plan once it's been approved.

**Step #6:** Conduct drills to test the plan and adjust it to correct for any weaknesses revealed.

## CONCLUSION

One thing is certain: regardless of the level of potential danger posed by Swine Flu over the coming months, every organization needs a plan to deal with the threat of infectious disease and related types of emergencies. It's only a matter of time before a new infectious disease emerges. So keep this Special Report for reference and planning. Your editors will keep you updated on new developments to help keep your employees safe. ✦

## APPENDIX ONE

*The Insider reviewed literally dozens of Exposure Control Plans. The one we thought worked the best was one from a School District in Vancouver (School Dist. 85). So we decided to base our own Model Plan on the District 85 Model.*

# MODEL H1N1 EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

Company ABC is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our workers as well as the visitors who enter our facilities. All workers are required to follow the procedures set out in this policy to prevent or reduce the risk of exposure to H1N1 influenza.

### H1N1 Influenza

The main reason the H1N1 influenza virus spreads is coughing or sneezing by a person infected with the virus. People may also become infected by touching their mouth or nose after touching something with the flu virus or germs on it. Eating pork does not cause the flu, as long as the meat is properly cooked.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Administrators & Supervisors

ABC Company has made and will remain in regular contact with the local Health Authority. A plan has been made with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to seek advice on what to communicate to staff regarding the current H1N1 Influenza outbreak.

### Staff

Influenza is caused by viruses, and is generally spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Here are six simple precautions:

1. Stay home when you're sick or have influenza symptoms. Get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick.
3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throw the tissue away immediately. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
4. Wash your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from getting sick. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. You can become ill by touching a surface contaminated with germs and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods, and avoid smoking, which may increase the risk of serious consequences if you do contract the flu.

If you have a fever or cough illness, regardless of where you have travelled, stay home from work and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. See a health care provider if your symptoms become worse but call ahead of time to let them know you have fever or cough illness.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All workers will receive training in the following:

1. The risk of exposure to H1N1 Influenza and the signs and symptoms of the disease.
2. Safe work procedures to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette.
3. Location of washing facilities, including dispensing stations for alcohol-based hand rubs.
4. How to report an exposure to or symptoms of the H1N1 Influenza.

### Hand Washing

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. We recommend that when you wash your hands—with soap and warm water—that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, non-alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work.

### Health Monitoring

Staff will promptly report any symptoms of the H1N1 Influenza to their manager or supervisor.

### Record Keeping

Company ABC will keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding the H1N1 Influenza, as well as reports of exposure and first aid records.

### Latest Updates

Updates on the impact of the outbreak in [insert jurisdiction] are being provided regularly by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and the Ministry of Health Services, and this information is available on the Ministry of Education's website as well. Please visit these websites for the most current and factual information about the swine flu outbreak.

If you have questions about the health situation in your district, you can call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day/seven days a week. Additional information on the swine influenza outbreak is also available through HealthLink BC.

### Travel

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a travel health warning that recommends postponing elective or non-essential travel to Mexico until further notice. A separate travel health notice for the United States has also been issued.

### Annual Review

This Exposure Control Plan will be reviewed at least annually and updated as new and updated information is made available. 🍁

**Instructions:** Use this Checklist to organize your pandemic planning preparations and evaluate their comprehensiveness and effectiveness.

## PREPAREDNESS PLANNING CHECKLIST

### OBJECTIVE #1: ORGANIZE

- Pick an already existing committee or assemble a new group that includes the safety coordinator, the person in charge of emergency planning (if that person isn't the safety coordinator) and somebody familiar with labour issues. Involve the JHSC as part of the planning process.
- Appoint a senior management official to head the planning team.
- Establish contacts to monitor workers' health in each business unit.
- Establish a contact to stay in touch with the provincial Ministry of Health and other reliable public sources of information about the influenza situation in Canada, your province and your community.

### OBJECTIVE #2: ASSESS RISKS

- Gauge the vulnerability of each business unit, operation and facility. For example, are there certain facilities of your company that the Ministry of Health might order shut down during a pandemic?
- Gauge the vulnerability of your business if influenza threatened the viability of any unit, operation and facility. Think of ways—such as opening an alternate facility—to keep operations going with minimal disruption in response to problems that may arise.
- Consider what role, if any, the government might call on you to play during a crisis. For example, might the government take over parts of your workforce or facility to perform emergency services?

### OBJECTIVE #3: PROTECT YOUR WORKERS' HEALTH

- Educate your workers about personal hygiene and other measures for guarding against the risk of infection, including:
  - Hand washing
  - "Cough etiquette"
  - Social distancing
  - Proper use of PPE
  - Vaccination
  - Precautions for workers planning to travel to affected areas.
- Keep your workers apprised of recent developments, both public and within your workplace.
- Post the location of hospitals, clinics, public health authorities and other health resources in your community.
- Establish and maintain communication with workers who are absent due to infection.
- Implement basic hygiene measures, such as providing soap, anti-bacterial products and paper towels and keeping sinks and surfaces that people touch, e.g., door knobs, clean.
- Post signs, posters and notices reminding workers to wash their hands properly, use cough etiquette, keep social distances, etc.
- Adopt design measures, such as keeping workstations as far apart as possible.

- Adopt work practices that promote social distance, for example, using conference calls instead of face-to-face meetings.
- Screen workers and visitors entering the workplace for signs of influenza.
- Provide workers with protective gloves, surgical masks and other PPE.

### OBJECTIVE #4: ADJUST YOUR HR POLICIES

- Ensure that policies allowing for social distancing or quarantining are consistently enforced and based on objective criteria so as to avoid liability for disability discrimination.
- Ensure that policies regarding absenteeism don't discriminate against workers with disabilities and accommodate each worker in accordance with his or her own unique condition and situation.
- Ensure that policies and practices for obtaining, disclosing and using medical information about workers, e.g., to verify their illness and determine their needs for accommodation, comply with personal privacy laws.
- Ensure that policies and practices for disciplining workers who refuse to work because they fear exposure to H1N1 or other infectious illnesses comply with workers' refusal rights under OHS laws.
- Ensure that company's use of temporary workers to replace absent workers is permissible under the terms of the collective agreement.
- Ensure that arrangements that require workers to put in longer hours to make up for labour shortfalls comply with maximum hours restrictions under the employment standards law.
- Ensure that workers get all the overtime they're entitled to for the extra hours they're working.
- Ensure that workers who contract the illness or take off work to care for a family member who does get the unpaid leave rights they're entitled to under ESA laws and their contracts.

### OBJECTIVE #5: PLAN TO KEEP BUSINESS RUNNING

- List crucial business functions that pandemic influenza might disrupt.
- Determine which functions are a priority to maintain and which you can do without, if necessary.
- Identify the skills and personnel needed to keep the priority functions running.
- Look for alternative sources to replace the skills and personnel associated with such functions on a short-term basis.
- Develop a plan to modify, reduce or halt specific functions—or even close the business temporarily—to cope with the impact of a pandemic-related disruption.
- Establish an organizational structure to coordinate the emergency response and continuity of operations.

### OBJECTIVE #6: PREPARE FOR SERVICE & SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS

- List all outside suppliers of critical goods, materials and services to your organization.
- Identify alternative sources for those goods and services and/or start building (or adding to existing) stockpiles and reserves.
- Make sure your business has access to contingency funds so it can meet payroll, pay its contractors and meet other critical financial obligations.

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- Determine the minimum staff you need to maintain critical business functions.
- Identify the credentials workers need to fill those functions, such as licences to operate heavy machinery.
- Start looking for sources of labour to meet those needs. Consider both internal—bringing back retirees or retraining existing workers—and external sources.
- Make sure you have an infrastructure to train and support replacement workers.

### OBJECTIVE #8: ESTABLISH LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH WORKERS

- Develop the means to communicate with your workforce in case of a pandemic.
- Make sure you have a system for briefing workers as to developments, both public and within your workplace.
- Establish a method for remaining in contact with workers who fall ill or take absences to care for others.

### OBJECTIVE #9: ESTABLISH LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

- Identify your key customers, partners, suppliers and other business relations.
- Establish secure means of communicating with those parties in the event of pandemic outbreaks.

### OBJECTIVE #10: PREPARE A PLAN

- Have planning team prepare a draft plan documenting your planning efforts and listing the results of all planning decisions undertaken in pursuit of Objectives 1 through 9.
- Give the draft to senior managers, business unit leaders and the JHSC or worker representative for internal review.
- Give the draft to key suppliers, customers, partners and local government and health officials for external review.
- Adopt appropriate changes in response to each review.
- Acquaint workers and management with the details of the plan once it's been approved.
- Conduct drills to test the plan and adjust it to correct for any weaknesses revealed.

**Help Your Employees Stay Safe & Prevent the Spread of Swine Flu in the Workplace.**

This **Safety Talk!** explains the steps your employees should take to stay healthy as swine flu spreads. On the last page of this Special Report you'll find a reproducible employee Handout. This **Safety Talk!** is also available as a FREE download to subscribers at [www.SafetyComplianceInsider.com](http://www.SafetyComplianceInsider.com) including audio track, synchronized PowerPoint, and complete presentation materials.

# Safety Talks!

**FOR THE LEADER**

Infection Control ■ T1909-01

## Pandemic Preparedness: What You Can Do to Protect Yourself from Swine Flu

### BEFORE THE TALK

### 7 PREPARATION TIPS

- 1** Review your company's pandemic emergency preparedness plan. Will the business close if a certain percentage of the workforce is absent? How will operations be maintained with short staff? How will your business go on if supplies or transportation are disrupted?
- 2** Check out your company's business continuity plan for getting up to speed after workers have recovered from the flu. Prepare to review it with your workers.
- 3** Your workers will need to know about sick leave policies. Will they get paid if they stay home?
- 4** Consider how work can be reorganized to minimize contact with the public and with fellow workers.
- 5** Is telecommuting an option for your workers? Arrangements should be made ahead of time rather than after the flu hits your workplace.
- 6** Do workers have easy access to handwashing facilities and waterless hand cleaner?
- 7** For amusement and education, have someone demonstrate the infection control benefits of coughing or sneezing into his upper sleeve rather than his hand or a tissue.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY:** Each participant is to sign below, for record kept on file.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Answers to Quiz:**

1. home 2. d. all of these 3. b. slow the spread of flu. 4. Flu 5. True

This **Safety Talk!** comes from **Safety Smart Online**, a complete easy-to-use safety training solution that gives you over 600 Safety Talks! along with proven safety training tools and help. For more information and a FREE demo call **1-800-667-9300**.

### AFTER THE TALK

### CHECKLIST

- Provided extra training to workers who did poorly on quiz  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Observed workers  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Refresher training  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (describe)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Safety Talks!

## Pandemic Preparedness: What You Can Do to Protect Yourself from Swine Flu

### WHAT'S AT STAKE

You need to know two things about the flu pandemic. One, you need to know how to protect yourself from the flu. And, two, you need to know your part in your company's pandemic emergency plan.

### WHAT'S THE DANGER

The H1N1 flu has been declared a pandemic, which means it is expected to affect many people around the world. Most will recover, some will die and business and services are likely to be disrupted.

### EXAMPLE

Here's what could happen in your workplace: Many of your fellow workers could be home with the flu, and you might need to fill in for them to keep crucial services and processes working.

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- ✿ Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap or hand sanitizer. Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing or blowing your nose. Wash up after touching common surfaces such as phones, railings or work benches.
- ✿ Cover your cough with your upper shirt sleeve.
- ✿ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- ✿ Practice "social distancing." Avoid or minimize contact with infected people. Stay out of crowds.
- ✿ Minimize group meetings; use e-mails, phone conferences, web sessions and text messaging. If meetings are necessary, avoid close contact with others and make sure that the meeting room is well ventilated.
- ✿ Limit unnecessary visitors to the

workplace.

- ✿ Stay home from work if you have flu symptoms. These may include fever, runny nose, body aches, sore throat, cough, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- ✿ Maintain a healthy lifestyle, paying attention to rest, diet, exercise and relaxation for good overall health.
- ✿ Learn your part in your company's pandemic plan. Find out whom you should contact if you are staying home sick. If others are absent, what extra duties will you take on? If the workplace closes temporarily, how will you be contacted when it reopens?
- ✿ Find out your company's policies on taking leave to care for family members.
- ✿ Tell your supervisor and co-workers if you have any medical conditions that could be a concern if you become ill at work.
- ✿ Get your flu shot.
- ✿ If your job is in healthcare, emergency response, corrections, law enforcement or other occupations that put you in close contact with sick people, find out about any special precautions or equipment such as respirators. Learn about isolation procedures and how to protect yourself and others.

### FINAL WORD

Take advantage of any emergency preparedness training offered by your employer. Learn ahead of time what you should do if your workplace gets hit by the flu. And remember the two most effective ways to slow the spread of flu: handwashing and staying home if you are sick.

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. If you have the flu, you should stay \_\_\_\_.
2. You should wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after
  - a. coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
  - b. shaking hands
  - c. touching common surfaces such as phones or doorknobs
  - d. all of these
3. Social distancing recommended to
  - a. make you lonely.
  - b. slow the spread of flu.
4. If you are coughing, sneezing, vomiting, feverish and achy, you might have the \_\_\_\_.
5. The H1N1 flu can be fatal.  
 True  False

### What Would You Do?

You are feeling chilled, feverish and achy, and your throat is scratchy. Should you go to work?

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