



Health & Safety Task Force

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Guidelines for virus control among Local Unions' staff

Exposure and Vulnerability

According to OSHA's classification, office workers are on a lower level risk of exposure to the novel H1N1 virus, but the risk depends on whether or not the tasks performed require close proximity to the general public and coworkers. Field staff and member services may be at higher risk. The workplace policy is based on the following assumptions described by the CDC (www.Pandemicflu.gov):

- Everybody is susceptible to the virus because it is a new virus;
- People can be infected but not develop clinically significant symptoms, although they can transmit infection;
- Rates of serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths will depend on the virulence of the virus. Risk groups for severe and fatal infection cannot be predicted with certainty but are likely to include infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with chronic or immunosuppressive medical conditions;
- Rates of absenteeism will depend on the severity of the pandemic. In a severe pandemic, absenteeism attributable to illness, the need to care for ill family members and fear of infection may reach 40 percent during the peak weeks of a community outbreak, with lower rates of absenteeism during the weeks before and after the peak. Certain public health measures (closing schools, quarantining household contacts of infected individuals, "snow days") are likely to increase rates of absenteeism;
- Workers who are ill with pandemic influenza or have a family member with influenza should stay home to minimize the spread of the pandemic.
- Children play a major role in transmission of infection. Epidemics will last 6 to 8 weeks in affected communities;
- Multiple waves are likely to occur with each wave lasting 2 to 3 months but the pattern for the novel H1N1 has not been established.

- The protective measures recommended by the CDC, OSHA and other agencies will be effective; however, social distancing, the use of respirators, and vaccines have not yet been proven to limit the spread of H1N1

Planning Strategy:

This proposal was based on existing Pandemic Influenza preparedness guidelines prepared by OSHA, DOT, the AFL-CIO and others. Actions were defined based on the target and the goal of the intervention:

1. Workers and how to protect them (prevention). Prevention involves risk and vulnerability assessment, protective measures, educational campaigns and information strategies.
2. Sick workers and how to support them (recovery). Recovery actions involve record-keeping, adequate sick leave policies and family support.
3. Union work and services and how to maintain them (services).

Service actions involve management, planning and staffing decisions. In the table below, each action area is defined, including the departments responsible for developing procedures, for implementing the specific tasks, and for monitoring the results.

Preparation	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Oversight Plan Decision matrix	Establish pandemic committee or oversight group Identify reliable source for defining risk phase Educate and enlist all departments	Safety department Secretary treasurer President	Program outline Timeline
ACTION 1: RISK EVALUATION			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Evaluate inter-employee exposure risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify work areas with work close together and shared spaces: (tables less than 6 feet apart, joint work on materials, shared paperwork) Identify workers that frequently share office equipment and supplies Identify events and activities that increase contact 	Map workplace Do risk assessment for these locations and titles using OSHA/PESH/CDC protocols as published	Department/office heads Accounting	Number of employees Description of each office Titles and risk rating
Evaluate exposure between staff and public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify departments and workers in greater contact with members 	Map external workplace Who works with children? Who uses public transport? Who does any work that put them on at a higher risk (going to hospitals, for example...)? Do risk assessment for these titles	Staff director Department heads VPs	Member services at other locations, arbitration, field staff (chairs and stewards) # employees Titles and risk rating
Identify workers at greater individual risk	Maintaining confidentiality, identify those at risk: serious cardiovascular or lung disease, diabetes, pregnancy, immune deficiency including cancer treatment		
Identify events scheduled for fall and winter Identify division meetings and other meetings	Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish level at which to reschedule events identify protective measures for 	Departments: all departments, special events	Agenda of rescheduled meeting to be announced to members

Identify upcoming trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that can't be canceled establish alternatives for meetings (conference calls) reschedule upcoming trainings, if possible 		List of protective measures and how and when to apply
ACTION 2: WORKPLACE RISK CONTROL			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish cleaning protocol for commonly touched surfaces, doorknobs, elevator buttons Establish cleaning protocol for shared surfaces, including providing wipes Install alcohol cleaner dispensers at elevators, in hallways, in or outside halls Provide portable alcohol cleansers for field staff 	General office/president's office, supervised by each VP/head of department	Incoming workers in dues or call center to clean computer keyboard and mouse, other shared tools Each to use own headset Materials purchased and made available
Ventilation	Evaluation flow and adequacy of ventilation		(note there is no powered exhaust ventilation at 80 West End)
Social distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move desks as needed Provide adequate office supplies to reduce sharing Eliminate shared phone use Establish alternate shifts Establish home work policy where appropriate Limit member services to phone calls, e-mail and website 	Department heads, facilities	NEED to establish at what point this will be required
Vaccination	As available schedule vaccination for seasonal flu and H1N1	Safety to coordinate with OHS All to participate Encourage staff to get vaccinated at locations to encourage member	Vaccination schedule Outreach plan

		participation	
ACTION 3: TRAINING AND EDUCATION			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Educate and train employees in hand hygiene, cough etiquette and social distance techniques at the workplace and outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and training session on influenza for staff • Stimulate staff to spread information for prevention with family members and friends • Promote vaccination • Posters 	Safety Department Communications Department	Training sessions Educational pieces (including website)
ACTION 4: COMMUNICATION			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Use of newsletters, intranets, staff meetings, and other internal communications tools to communicate emergency plans and procedures. Regular information update with members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send weekly e-mail blasts with updates and internal information for staff • Send text messages reminding of cleaning procedures and self protection measures • revise bulletins as needed • provide regular website updates 	Safety, Communications	Educational pieces and plan for distribution
ACTION 5: RECOVERY SUPPORT			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Monitoring cases of flu-like symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and test a reporting system • Publicize and require participation 	Safety Department Communications Department	Decide what level of confirmation needed (did they call their doctor?) This could include confidential notification by those most at risk.
Responding to affected staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop checklist for recognizing flu-like symptoms • Determine if staff will be required to leave if they have symptoms • Establish emergency sick leave 	Safety Department, Presidents Office, VPs, Bookkeeping, general office,	Procedures guide

	<p>policy for staff with flu-like symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish support net for staff with family members with flu-like symptoms • Establish policy on quarantine or school closing • Establish policy for those who are overextended • Set return-to-work rules 		
ACTION 6: Maintaining services			
Specific Actions	Controls/activities	Responsibilities	Notes/draft results
Maintain staff levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and project staffing using call in, health department projections and other • Flag key events or activities that are at risk 	Safety Department, Presidents Office, VPs, Bookkeeping,	Elaborate and discuss a coverage plan and monitoring for each department
Maintain work flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign shared responsibilities/backup for key departments or department heads so work is not suspended • Key staff to develop notes on work in case of absence to help others cover • Set policy on overtime • Hire temporary workers if essential 	Safety Department, Presidents Office, VPs, Bookkeeping,	