

SEASONAL INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Every year, seasonal influenza, or “the flu,” affects millions of businesses. The following checklist will provide tips and suggestions to consider when planning and responding to seasonal influenza.

✓	DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN
	Establish a pandemic emergency team cutting across all departments. Give each team member specific tasks and ensure that at least two people are fully knowledgeable of every responsibility. Sample tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educating employees about the flu ○ Establishing attendance guidelines ○ Communicating with employees and clients ○ Developing an assignment sheet of who covers whom during an absence ○ Researching health coverage and screenings available to employees
	Identify who can work from home and determine the process for conducting business at home.
	Cross-train employees, supervisors and managers to cover other departments and geographic locations.
	Make a priority list of every company location and the distance between them in case someone has to come in from another location. Have directions to get from one location to the next.
	Develop a relationship with your local temporary personnel agencies for fill-in employees as needed.
	Evaluate and update your human resource, sick leave and insurance policies.
	Compare and combine best practices with your vendors to ensure your needs are always covered.
	Have team members sign up for alerts and timely announcements from state and local health departments, as well as from the national Centers for Disease Control.
	Set up an Alert Notification System to communicate your policies, plans, decisions and news updates to your employees, stakeholders, clients and vendors.
	Hold meetings and ‘run-throughs’ to ensure that pandemic team members and employees understand what is required of them in an emergency.
✓	PREPARING THE WORKPLACE
	Encourage employees to get flu vaccines. If possible, offer vaccines free of charge or for a nominal fee at your place of business.
	Publicize information about the availability of flu vaccines offered in your local communities, such as at doctors’ offices, hospitals and retail pharmacies.
	Hang posters that encourage everyone to take maximum risk prevention, including covering their mouth when they sneeze or cough, and washing their hands.
	Providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer in kitchens, bathrooms and other heavily trafficked areas.
	Clean all public-area surfaces with germ-killing solutions
✓	DURING A FLU OUTBREAK
	Notify all employees of the situation at hand.
	Monitor and report any unusual increases in absenteeism.
	Determine the threshold for needing replacement staff.
	Encourage employees who don’t feel well to stay home for at least 24 hours or until the fever breaks.
	Expect sick employees to be out 3-5 days.
	Expand on your work-from-home policy, if possible to allow employees who are at risk to work more days from home during peak flu season.

What is Influenza?

Influenza, commonly known as the flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has the influenza virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year.

Symptoms of Flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue (very tired)

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Get Vaccinated

Each year's seasonal flu vaccine is different, and protects against several different influenza viruses that research suggests will be most common during that season. For example, the 2011-2012 flu vaccine protected against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness that year. There are two types of flu vaccines:

- **The "flu shot"**—an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. The seasonal flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people, people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.
- **The nasal-spray flu vaccine**—a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for "Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine"). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.

For more information on the flu and to find a flu clinic near you, visit <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

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