



# Oregon

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## Interim Guidelines from Oregon OSHA and the Oregon Public Health Division

### Information for Employers on 2009 H1N1 Flu in the Workplace

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In the event of the spread of the 2009 H1N1 flu virus (Swine Flu) in Oregon, businesses and other employers will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting damage to the economy. Knowing the facts and following these guidelines will reduce the risk of spreading the disease.

#### Signs and symptoms

Fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, lethargy, body ache or nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

#### Illnesses at work

- Employees should not return to work if they are ill and are encouraged to seek immediate medical attention if they are experiencing symptoms consistent with the 2009 H1N1 flu virus.
- Individuals with acute febrile respiratory illness stay home for 7 days after the start of illness and fever is gone (**isolation**).
- Household members of patients with influenza are encouraged to voluntarily remain at home until the period of risk for influenza is past — about seven days.
- Businesses should consider changing workplace environments and schedules to decrease social density to the greatest extent possible without disrupting essential services.
- Businesses should adopt sick-leave policies to accommodate the measures outlined above.

#### Personal Hygiene

When employees are working directly with the public, they should have immediate access to alcohol-based surface wipes or paper towels and disinfectant cleaners, hand sanitizers, and an ample supply of tissue. All waste products from cleaning should be immediately thrown in the trash. Employees should avoid coming into direct contact with patrons. When handling common items such as papers, money, or coins, employees should not touch their face, eyes, and nose without first cleaning their hands.

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## Respiratory Protection

Unless otherwise specified, "respirator" refers to an N95 or higher filtering facepiece respirator certified by the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

**General public (non-occupational use)** – The general public should understand the importance of covering coughs and sneezes in interrupting the spread of influenza. Respirators are not recommended for the general public in response to the outbreak.

**Places of employment** – Personnel that normally are required to wear a respirator for occupational exposures need to meet the requirements of the respiratory protection standard 1910.134. This is important for **employees working in health care settings** tasked with taking care of flu patients. Use N95 (or higher protection factor) respirators.

[http://www.cbs.state.or.us/osha/pdf/rules/division\\_2/1910-134.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/osha/pdf/rules/division_2/1910-134.pdf)

**Voluntary respirator use in occupational settings** -- In places of employment where the only use of an N95 respirator is for protection from the 2009 flu virus, Appendix D of Oregon OSHA 1910.134, Respiratory Protection needs to be made available.

[http://www.cbs.state.or.us/osha/pdf/rules/division\\_2/1910-134-app-d.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/osha/pdf/rules/division_2/1910-134-app-d.pdf). In these situations, employees are wearing the respirator in the same manner and for the same reasons as the general public.

## Contact hazards

Contact is a major source of transmission. It is important to keep areas clean and sanitary. Employees, such as janitors, that may come in contact with material potentially contaminated should wear impervious gloves (e.g., neoprene, nitrile, or vinyl).

## Surface cleaning

Keep hard surfaces, such as kitchen countertops, tabletops, desktops, and bathroom surfaces, clean and disinfected. Keep surfaces touched by more than one person, such as doorknobs, refrigerator handles, and microwaves, clean and disinfected.

- Clean the surface with a commercial product that is both a detergent (cleans) and a disinfectant (kills germs). These products can be used when surfaces are not visibly dirty.
- Another way to do this is to wash the surface with a general household cleaner (soap or detergent), rinse with water, and follow with a disinfectant. This method should be used for visibly dirty surfaces.
- Use disinfectants on surfaces that are touched often. Clean the surface as explained above before using disinfectants.
- If disinfectants are not available, use a chlorine bleach solution made by adding one tablespoon of bleach to a quart (four cups) of water; use a cloth to apply this to surfaces and let stand for three to five minutes before rinsing with clean water. (For a larger supply of disinfectant, add one-quarter cup of bleach to a gallon [16 cups] of water.)
- Wear gloves and eye protection when working with strong bleach solutions. Rubber or nitrile gloves are recommended.

## Other general guidelines

- Prepare and plan for operations with a reduced workforce.
- Disseminate general information about transmission, signs and symptoms of illness, and effective prevention measures to limit transmission. Information is available at [www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov).
- Develop a sick-leave policy that does not penalize sick employees, thereby encouraging employees who have influenza-related symptoms to stay home.
- Reduce or eliminate unnecessary social interactions when feasible.
- Encourage adequate ventilation of the workplace, including outside air.
- Discourage employees from using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or equipment. Recognize that employees with ill family members may need to stay home to care for them.
- Minimize exposure to fellow employees by encouraging telecommuting, if possible.
- Above all, promote proper respiratory illness hygiene, including the following:
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and discard the tissue into the trash immediately. Use your sleeve or clothing to cover your coughs and sneezes if a tissue is not available. Avoid using your hands.
  - Wash hands frequently and regularly, especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. This is how germs are spread.
- Have hand hygiene products and waste receptacles for their disposal readily available.
- Encourage general healthy practices such as good nutrition and smoking cessation.

## Probable and confirmed cases of 2009 H1N1 flu virus

Local health departments will determine whether it is necessary to identify and monitor any employees who may have been exposed to 2009 H1N1 flu virus. If monitoring exposed employees is necessary, the local health department will assume primary responsibility for this activity.

- Employees with fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, lethargy, body ache or nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea should be encouraged to stay home and avoid interaction with the general public until seven days after their symptoms have resolved.
- Close contacts (within six feet) within the work and home environment of the case should also stay home for three to four days.

## Other sources of information

[www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov)

<http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html>

<http://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/pandemicflu/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>