



HEALTH SITUATION ACTION PLAN

Swine Flu Response Plan: Immediate Guidance for HR

This document outlines four immediate steps HR should take to respond to the recent outbreak in several countries of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.

STEP 1: Review Pandemic Preparedness Plan

Organizations should start reviewing their pandemic preparedness plans and other continuity of operations procedures to understand how the chain of command and communications will work if a pandemic develops. Match the current health situation to the appropriate level designated in the plan and begin plan implementation. If not already accounted for by the preparedness plan, assess the need to temporarily expand flexible work arrangements and policies to deal with the influenza outbreak. If your organization does not have a pandemic preparedness plan, create a cross-functional task force now to build one.

STEP 2: Charge Local HR Staff with Collecting Daily Health Information

Contact all regional HR offices and have them compile a daily report with two key items: first, have them monitor and forward all local government health advisory notices regarding all required and recommended actions for preventing the spread of the flu among the general population; second, have local HR staff work with managers to forward daily logs of the number of health-related absences. This is critical in gauging the possible spread of the flu before officials can detect it.

STEP 3: Communicate the Organization's Response to All Key Stakeholders

Employees—Tailor mass communication outreaches to employees according to the level of reported flu cases in or near their regions (i.e., no cases reported, isolated cases reported, significant number of cases reported). Include the following information in an e-mail or company intranet postings:

- State the current local health situation
- Explain how the organization's preparedness plan aims to protect employees and the organization
- Recommend health actions employees should take to protect themselves and their families
- Remind employees to keep emergency contact information up-to-date
- Provide details on how wages and benefits may be impacted by pandemic-related work disruptions
- Provide managers and supervisors with clear guidance on how to handle employees who become ill
- Include a point of contact for concerns and a hotline or other appropriate source for corporate emergency information

Clients and Vendors/Suppliers—Work with Marketing to create a branded organizational response that reflects your organization's core mission and values. Clearly explain the company's preparedness efforts. If potential operational disruptions are likely in particular locations, explain how the organization will work to resume normal operations as soon as possible and whom to contact with questions.

STEP 4: Forecast Financial and Workforce Impact

For areas with quickly growing infection rates, work with your benefits provider to estimate the number of individuals who may become infected and the length of time for hospitalization/sick leave that may be required during an influenza outbreak. Use this data to forecast potential unanticipated healthcare costs and to conduct workforce planning for mission-critical activities. Evaluate the need for basic infection control items, such as surgical masks, and advanced medical devices, such as respirators, for personnel required to remain in close contact with infected populations. Select vendors and establish contingency contracts to quickly acquire infection control items as needed.

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