

Exposure Control Program for Pandemic Influenza

Company information

[name]

[address]

[contact information (names and phone numbers)]

Health hazards of pandemic influenza

The effects of pandemic influenza are expected to be much more severe than for seasonal influenza because most people will not have any immunity to the virus.

Symptoms

Seasonal flu affects people to varying degrees, with symptoms including headache, fever, fatigue, sore throat, and runny nose. In some cases, secondary infections such as pneumonia may develop. Symptoms of pandemic influenza are likely to include high fever (higher than 38°C), chest pain, and difficulty breathing.

Transmission

The BC Centre for Disease Control advises that influenza is communicable for 24 hours before the onset of symptoms and 3–5 days afterward (this may be longer in some children and some adults).

Pandemic influenza is spread in the same way that seasonal influenza is spread. Exposure to the virus may occur in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Shaking hands with an infected person or touching a surface contaminated with the virus, followed by touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth
- Infectious droplets (from a coughing or sneezing person) landing in the eye or onto the mucosa (moist inner surfaces) of the nose or mouth
- Breathing infectious airborne droplets or particles (from coughing, sneezing, or aerosol-generating medical procedures on infected patients)
- Sharing food items or utensils with an infected person.

Statement of purpose

Our company is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our staff. A combination of measures will be used to minimize worker exposure to pandemic influenza, including the most effective control technologies available. Our work procedures will protect

not only our workers, but also other workers who enter our facilities. All employees must follow the procedures outlined in this plan to prevent or reduce exposure to pandemic influenza.

Responsibilities

Employer responsibilities

Our company will:

- Ensure that the materials (for example, gloves, alcohol-based hand rubs, and washing facilities) and other resources (for example, worker training materials) required to implement and maintain the plan are readily available where and when they are required.
- Select, implement, and document the appropriate site-specific control measures.
- Ensure that supervisors and workers are educated and trained to an acceptable level of competency.
- Ensure that workers use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) — for example, gloves, gowns, eye protection, and respirators.
- Conduct a periodic review of the plan's effectiveness. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.
- Maintain records of training and inspections.
- Ensure that a copy of the exposure control plan is available to workers.

Supervisor responsibilities

Our supervisors will:

- Ensure that workers are adequately instructed on the controls for the hazards at the location.
- Ensure that workers use proper respirators, they have been fit tested, and the results are recorded.
- Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.

Worker responsibilities

Our workers will:

- Know the hazards of workplace.
- Follow established work procedures as directed by the employer or supervisor.
- Use any required PPE as instructed.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the supervisor.
- Know how and when to report exposure incidents.

Risk identification and assessment

Three primary routes of transmission are anticipated for pandemic influenza, all of which need to be controlled. These include contact, droplet, and airborne transmission.

Contact transmission, both direct and indirect

Direct contact involves skin-to-skin contact, such as patient care or emergency response activity that requires direct personal contact (for example, turning or bathing a patient). Indirect contact involves a worker touching a contaminated intermediate object such as a table, doorknob, telephone, or computer keyboard, and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. Contact transmission is important to consider because influenza viruses can persist for minutes on hands and hours on surfaces.

Droplet transmission

Large droplets may be generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and also during certain medical procedures such as cough induction. Droplets travel a short distance through the air, and can be deposited on inanimate surfaces or in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

Airborne transmission

Airborne (inhalable) particles can be generated from some medical procedures such as endotracheal intubation, bronchoscopy, nebulizer treatment, or airway suctioning. They can also be generated from coughs and sneezes.

Coughs and sneezes produce both large droplets and smaller airborne particles. The smaller particles remain suspended in air for longer periods, and can be inhaled. The large droplets can also evaporate quickly to form additional inhalable particles. As the distance from the person coughing or sneezing increases, the risk of infection from airborne exposure is reduced; but it can still be a concern in smaller, enclosed areas, especially where there is limited ventilation. As the number of infected people in a room increases, the risk of infection can increase.

The following risk assessment table is adapted from Regulation Guideline G6.34-6. Using this guideline as a reference, we have determined that the risk level of our workers is moderate to low. Our workers work in an office environment, and have little contact with the general public. However, they may be handling potentially contaminated objects.

Risk assessment for pandemic influenza

	Low risk Workers who typically have no contact with people infected with pandemic influenza	Moderate risk Workers who may be exposed to infected people from time to time in relatively large, well ventilated workspaces	High risk Workers who may have contact with infected patients, or with infected people in small, poorly ventilated workspaces
Hand hygiene	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)
Disposable gloves	Not required	Not required (unless handling contaminated objects on a regular basis)	Yes in some cases (for example, when working directly with pandemic influenza patients)
Aprons, gowns, or similar body protection	Not required	Not required	Yes in some cases (for example, when working directly with pandemic influenza patients)
Eye protection - goggles or Face shield	Not required	Not required	Yes in some cases (for example, when working directly with pandemic influenza patients)
Airway Protection - respirators	Not required	Not required (unless likely to be exposed to coughing and sneezing)	Yes (minimum N95 respirator or equivalent)

Risk control

The Regulation requires employers to implement infectious disease controls in the following order of preference:

1. Engineering controls
2. Administrative controls
3. Personal protective equipment (PPE).

It is not necessary to implement engineering controls in our workplace because the risk of exposure can be controlled using administrative controls (for example, hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette) and PPE (respirators).

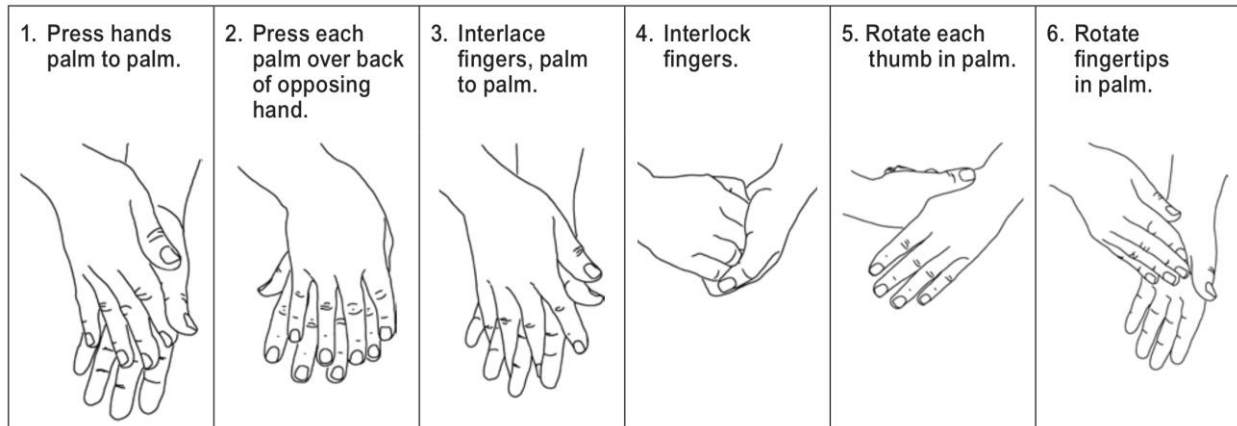
Hand washing

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body—particularly the eyes, nose, and mouth—or to other surfaces that are touched.

Wash your hands immediately:

- Before leaving a work area
- After handling materials that may be contaminated
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, or applying makeup.

Hand washing procedure



Use soap and warm running water. (It doesn't have to be hot to do the job.) If water is unavailable, use a waterless hand cleanser that has at least 70% alcohol. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the cleanser. Alcohol-based hand rub dispensers are located adjacent to the washrooms and kitchen area.

Cough/sneeze etiquette

Our workers are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquette, which is a combination of measures that minimizes the transmission of diseases via droplet or airborne routes.

Cough/sneeze etiquette includes the following components:

- Educate workers in control measures, including hand washing.
- Post signs at entry points to instruct everyone about control measures.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues to contain secretions, and dispose of them promptly in a waste container.
- Offer surgical masks to people who are coughing.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.

If workers show symptoms of pandemic influenza

If workers are ill with pandemic influenza, they should stay home. If they develop symptoms of influenza while at work, they should leave the workplace. Workers should only return to the

workplace once they have recovered from influenza and no longer show symptoms. Workers should inform their manager or supervisor if they are ill with pandemic influenza.

Use of surgical masks

A surgical mask is a protective barrier that is worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to contain large droplets generated during coughing and sneezing *by the person using the mask*. Surgical masks help minimize the spread of potentially infected material from the wearer to other people.

Under some circumstances (for example, an emergency), some workers who have pandemic influenza may be required to return to work. These workers should wear surgical masks and practice cough/sneeze etiquette to avoid infecting other workers. Workers who develop symptoms of pandemic influenza or suspect that they might have influenza must wear surgical masks in the workplace. Surgical masks are available in the First Aid room.

Worker training

Our workers will receive training in the following:

- The risk of exposure to pandemic influenza, and the signs and symptoms of the disease
- Safe work procedures to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Location of washing facilities, including dispensing stations for alcohol-based hand rubs
- Proper use of surgical masks
- How to seek first aid
- How to report an exposure to or symptoms of pandemic influenza.

Health monitoring

Our workers will promptly report any symptoms of pandemic influenza to their manager or supervisor and the first aid attendant.

Record keeping

Our company will keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding pandemic influenza, as well as exposure reports and first aid records.

Annual review

We will review the exposure control plan every year and update it as necessary, in consultation with our joint health and safety committee or worker health and safety representative.