



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICES
1155 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155



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OCT 30 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRUBTION

SUBJECT: Influenza Preparedness on the Pentagon Reservation and in Washington Headquarters Services (WHS)-Managed Leased Facilities

Outbreaks of influenza, such as the current 2009-H1N1 influenza, may impact the National Capital Region. The Department of Defense is committed to promoting a safe working environment at both the Pentagon Reservation and in WHS-managed leased facilities. With respect to influenza, we will follow recommendations made by the Pentagon's Public Health Emergency Officer. This memorandum outlines the influenza risk in workplaces, and the measures that personnel should take to protect the workspace during an influenza outbreak.

The WHS Safety and Environmental Management Branch, in coordination with the DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic (DTHC) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, assessed the risk of influenza in the Pentagon and in WHS-managed leased facilities. The findings of this assessment are outlined below:

(1) Employees who work at the DTHC and the US Air Force Flight Medicine Clinic in the Pentagon have been designated as being at high risk of exposure because they are in close contact with patients who have or are suspected to have influenza. Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators, surgical masks, nitrile gloves, and gowns will be provided to employees who are in direct contact with patients or are deemed to have duties that put them at higher risk of disease exposure.

(2) Employees who interact with the public such as Pentagon Force Protection Agency officers at entrance posts or cashiers are considered to be at medium risk of exposure. However, while 2009-H1N1 influenza has a high infectivity rate, it presents a low health risk. Thus, no control measures are required at this time.

(3) All other Pentagon and WHS-managed leased facilities employee workplaces are considered to be at low risk of exposure. The use of PPE is not necessary in low risk environments.

All individuals are encouraged to take personal protective measures to stay healthy. This includes staying home if you are ill, frequent hand washing, covering the mouth with the sleeve or facial tissues when coughing or sneezing, keeping the personal workspaces clean, and maintaining social distancing where possible. Annual influenza

vaccination(s) is one of the best and most reliable preventive measures. Depending on whether you are a federal or contract employee, or a military dependent, contact DTHC, another military treatment facility, or your private health care provider for the vaccine(s).

Individuals with influenza may be contagious before symptoms become apparent. Employees who become ill while at work should be encouraged to go home and should be isolated until they depart for home. Sick employees should use facial tissues to contain coughs and sneezes while in the office to minimize the spread of disease to others. Management should encourage individuals to take sick leave and not return until their temperature remains normal without medications for 24 hours. Active Duty military are required to report to the DTHC, or their enrolled military treatment facility, for an evaluation prior to being granted sick leave per normal sick call requirements.

Practicing good personal hygiene is always a good measure. Offices where access to soap and running water are not readily available may wish to obtain supplies of hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes. To be effective, the hand sanitizer must contain greater than 60 percent isopropyl alcohol and/or ethyl alcohol, and the disinfectant wipes must contain the same alcohol(s). These items may be obtained from the normal office supply stores and their catalogues.

For further guidance or questions, my point of contact is Mr. Michael P. Stebbing, CIH, 703-693-3683 or Michael.Stebbing@whs.mil.


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