Department of Energy

Recommended Action Matrix for Pandemic Influenza August 2009

Introduction

The following document provides guidance to Department of Energy (DOE) program offices and field elements to consider in preparation for a possible influenza pandemic. Included in this matrix is information for employees, supervisors, building facility management, occupational medicine providers, child care facilities, and security to consider in their pandemic planning. The recommended actions are based on information available from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Personnel Management, and DOE's Biologic Event Monitoring Team (BEMT).

This Recommended Action Matrix for Pandemic Influenza replaces an earlier guidance document, entitled MEDCON Alert Matrix that had been developed in preparation for a potential Avian Influenza (H5N1) pandemic. With the recent 2009 H1N1 influenza outbreak, the BEMT reviewed its earlier documents, updated information and created additional guidance. The Recommended Action Matrix differs from the MEDCON* levels in that the recommended actions are more specific, provides guidance to employees and supervisors, and is collapsed into three categories depending on the pandemic geographic distribution and disease severity.

The Recommended Action Matrix for Pandemic Influenza may be utilized to support pandemic planning decisions in conjunction with the recommendations of site or facility occupational medical providers, and State and local health departments. The Matrix should be tailored to a specific site's needs and the geographic distribution and severity of disease. It is important to note that all pandemic plans remain flexible to accommodate new epidemiologic and medical information as it is revealed.

The Recommended Action Matrix for Pandemic Influenza is just one part of the Department's pandemic plan. Additional guidance and educational materials can be found on DOE's pandemic web page at http://www.hss.energy.gov/HealthSafety/pandemic.html The Department encourages every employee to become familiar with this site and to practice the recommended actions to protect their own health and well being.

Implementation

The goals of the Federal Government's response to pandemic influenza are to limit the spread of a pandemic; mitigate disease, suffering, and death; and sustain infrastructure and lessen the impact on the economy and the functioning of society. The *Recommended Action Matrix* was designed to make DOE employees mindful of actions that should be considered in the pandemic preparation process and actions that should be implemented during an influenza outbreak. Collectively, CDC and HHS refer to the implementation of these guidelines (e.g. staying home when sick, hand washing, social distancing, and cough etiquette) as nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs).

According to HHS, the timing of initiation of various NPIs will influence their effectiveness. Implementing these measures prior to the pandemic may result in economic and social hardship without public health benefit, and over time, may result in "intervention fatigue" and erosion of

public adherence. Conversely, implementing these interventions after extensive spread of pandemic influenza illness in a community may limit the public health benefits of employing these measures. **HHS guidance suggests that the primary activation trigger for initiating interventions should be the arrival and transmission of pandemic virus.** It is recommended for planning purposes that these NPIs are maintained for up to 12 weeks in a pandemic.

The suggested guidelines for DOE have been categorized into three levels, 1 through 3, as the severity and geographic distribution of H1N1 influenza increases. Each higher level is built on implementing the actions in the previous lower level. The "trigger" for implementing each level is based on disease incidence (the number of cases in the community surrounding the site) and/or the rate of absenteeism at work. In addition, the severity of the disease may be used to modulate the implementation of these recommended activities.

Implementation of Level 1 activities are recommended at the beginning of an influenza outbreak, when clusters of disease in a community are relatively small. These conditions may be similar to what is experienced during the rise of seasonal flu, where about 10 percent of the population is infected (or 10 percent of the workforce is absent). As the size of these disease outbreaks becomes larger (absenteeism around 20-25 percent), or symptoms associated with the disease become more severe, it is recommended that the additional guidance in level 2 be implemented. As the outbreak approaches pandemic levels, where 35 to 40 percent of the population is infected (absenteeism 35-40 percent), the guidance in level 3 may be implemented. DOE sites or facilities that elect to implement these guidelines must consider local community situations or the rate of absenteeism at the site.

The recommendation to activate a Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan occurs at level 3. Each site or facility should evaluate its particular situation, and ensure that pandemic planning is part of their COOP.

High Risk Individuals

The recommended actions are generally designed for application to most employees. Supervisors and pandemic planners should be aware that there are certain groups of individuals who are at higher risk for adverse health outcomes associated with the flu. These groups include pregnant women, those with asthma or diabetes, and those with other underlying medical conditions. Some of the recommended actions in the matrix may be applied earlier to these high risk individuals (e.g. they would be encouraged to telework earlier than other employees). These individuals would be expected to self-identify to their supervisors, although they need not disclose the specific medical condition.

^{*} Programs that have developed their pandemic planning according to the MEDCON matrix may find the following useful: MEDCON 0-2 similar to Recommended Action Matrix (RAM) Level 1; MEDCON 3-4 similar to RAM Level 2 and MEDCON 5-6, similar to RAM Level 3

Level 1 Viral Outbreak

Small clusters of human to human transmission Low virulence (symptoms similar to seasonal influenza) Community incidence or site absenteeism about 10 percent

Responsibility	Recommended Actions			
Employees				
General Employee Population	 Focus on personal preparedness and disease prevention for yourself and others. Exercise, eat a healthy diet, and get plenty of sleep. Follow CDC guidelines on hand-washing (at least 20-30 seconds with soap or an alcohol-based hand gel). Wash your hands frequently. Cover your cough or sneezes appropriately, then wash your hands or use hand gel. Use a tissue or paper towel to open restroom door handles and to turn on/off faucets. If you or anyone who lives with you has flu-like symptoms call your doctor or other medical provider. Do not come to work sick! If possible, telework; discuss telework options with your supervisor. Review sick leave and family leave options. Use sick leave as needed, plan to remain at home 24 hours after your fever returns to normal (without the use of medications). If your doctor or other health care provider confirms or suspects influenza, inform your supervisor. Plan an annual seasonal influenza immunization. 			
Shared Equipment	 Viruses do not typically last a long time on solid surfaces; however, it is always good practice to wipe surfaces of shared equipment periodically with a sanitizing wipe or solution. For shared phones, consider individual headsets. 			
Office Water Coolers	 It is always good practice to sanitize stand-alone, office-type water coolers between water bottle replacements. Companies have instructions on their websites to sanitize coolers. Do not touch drinking cups, mouths, or water bottles to water fountain spigots. 			
Team Sports Fitness Centers	 Avoid close contact with others. Do not share towels, water bottles, etc. 			
	Supervisors			
Supervisors	 Ensure employees are informed about pandemic planning and preparedness. Ensure that notification lists are up to date. Review your local pandemic plan and discuss with employees. 			

	 Verify appropriate telework agreements are in place for employees. Review the advisability of subordinates teleworking if they become sick or anyone who lives with them becomes sick. Keep aware of anyone who is confirmed or suspected to have influenza. Consider IT access issues such as RSA tokens, if applicable, for employees who 			
Supervisors (cont.)	 are eligible to work from home. Understand Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)/Privacy rules. 			
	 Contact your human resource staff for guidelines regarding sick leave and family leave policies. Keep your management chain and human resources staff (at Headquarters, administrative staff) aware of anyone who is suspected or confirmed with influenza. 			
	 In the event of a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel should take sick or annual leave until able to return to work. 			
	Program Offices/Field Elements			
Travel	 DOE follows State Department and CDC travel recommendations. Advise employees who return from a location for which a travel advisory exists to stay home, and if possible, telework. In the event of a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel should take sick or annual leave until able to return to work. 			
Meetings Conferences	There is currently no restriction on conducting or attending meetings and/or conferences.			
СООР	Review and update COOP plan, including section on pandemic planning, if applicable.			
	Facility Management			
Facilities	 Ensure that procedures are in place to sanitize offices. Ensure that custodial personnel are familiar with universal precautions and procedures to avoid cross contamination. Ensure that restrooms remain well stocked with supplies. Be prepared to have hand sanitation mechanisms/supplies at entrances and cafeterias/snack bars. Post signs to encourage personal preparedness and disease prevention. No change to the operation of ventilation systems is recommended. 			
Offices in General	No changes are recommended for office operations and/or cleaning schedules.			
Offices of sick individuals	Wipe desks, phones, and keyboards with a sanitizing solution or wipe.			

Custodial Crews	 Ensure that universal precautions against blood-borne pathogens are in place for cleaning restrooms or offices in which an individual has been sick. Ensure that Material Safety Data Sheets are available for cleaning/sanitizing solutions. Ensure that employees are following procedures for proper handling and use of chemicals. Prevent tendency to use more than necessary or to mix chemicals. 			
Food Service	 Ensure that food sanitation procedures are in place. Consider installing hand sanitizers at entrances for patrons. 			
	Child Care Centers			
Child Care Centers	 Ensure Centers are following their pandemic plans. Encourage parents to develop back up plans for the care of their sick children or in the event that their child care center is closed. 			
	Health Care Facilities			
Health Care Facilities	 Ensure health care providers are working in compliance with their pandemic plan and CDC guidance. Provide educational materials regarding influenza. Keep aware of the number of cases within your State or local area. Review information and guidance on HHS website: http://www.hss.energy.gov/HealthSafety/pandemic.html or CDC www.flu.gov or WHO websites. Consider the purchase and stockpiling of antiviral medication. Initiate dialogue with State Health Department regarding procurement of vaccines for employees with mission essential functions. Brief senior management of potential threat. Maintain stock of universal protective materials (gloves, masks, disinfectants, etc) 			
Security Forces				
Security Forces	 Follow recommended actions listed in "Employees" section above. Ensure hand-gel is placed at a visible and accessible location at reception areas. 			

Level 2

Viral Outbreak

Larger clusters, but human to human transmission is localized Moderate virulence

Community incidence or site absenteeism 20to 25 percent

Responsibility	Recommended Actions				
Employees					
General Employee Population	 Focus on personal preparedness and disease prevention for yourself and others. Exercise, eat a healthy diet, and get plenty of sleep. Follow CDC guidelines on hand-washing (at least 20-30 seconds with soap or an alcohol-based hand gel). Wash your hands frequently. Cover your cough or sneezes appropriately, then wash your hands or use hand gel. Use a tissue or paper towel to open restroom door handles and to turn on/off faucets. If you or anyone who lives with you has flu-like symptoms call your doctor or other medical provider. Do not come to work sick! If possible, telework; discuss telework options with supervisor. Review sick leave and family leave options. Use sick leave as needed, plan to remain at home 24 hours after your fever returns to normal (without the use of medications). If your doctor or other health care provider confirms or suspects H1N1 influenza, inform your supervisor. Plan an annual seasonal influenza immunization. Sign a telework agreement and get an RSA token if you are eligible to work from home, if not already completed. Develop a family response plan, including communicating or providing care for elderly or distant relatives. (See Department of Homeland Security, Red Cross, or community websites.) Avoid mass transportation during peak hours due to increased risk of exposure to ill or contagious commuters. If you experience anxiety, contact your local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) office. Prepare your home with extra food, water, medicine, toiletries, pet supplies to cover at least two weeks as for any emergency situation. 				
Shared Equipment	 Viruses do not typically last a long time on solid surfaces; however, it is always good practice to wipe surfaces of shared equipment periodically with a sanitizing wipe or solution. For shared phones, consider individual headsets. 				
Team Sports Fitness Centers	 Avoid close contact with others. Do not share towels, water bottles, etc. May cancel team sports. 				

Office Water Coolers

- It is always good practice to sanitize stand-alone, office-type water coolers between water bottle replacements. Companies have instructions on their websites to sanitize coolers.
- Do not touch drinking cups, mouths, or water bottles to water fountain spigots.

Supervisors

- Ensure employees are informed about pandemic planning and preparedness.
- Ensure that notification lists are up to date.
- Review your local pandemic plan and discuss with employees.
- Verify appropriate telework agreements are in place for employees
- Review the advisability of subordinates teleworking if they become sick or anyone who lives with them becomes sick.
- Keep aware of anyone who is confirmed or suspected to have H1N1.
- Consider IT access issues such as RSA tokens, if applicable, for employees who are eligible to work from home.
- Understand Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)/Privacy rules.
- Contact your human resource staff for guidelines regarding sick leave and family leave policies.

Keep your management chain and human resources staff (at Headquarters, administrative staff) aware of anyone who is suspected or confirmed with influenza.

- In the event of a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel should take sick or annual leave until able to return to work.
- Have signed telework agreements in place for employees, if not already completed.
- Encourage employees to apply for RSA tokens, if not already completed.
- Consider social distancing:
- Implement staggered work schedules;
- Limit the number of people in meetings dependent on the size and layout of the room (try to keep people 3 6 feet apart);
- Encourage conference calls and televideo meetings.
- Plan to have essential workers backed up "3-deep" by cross-training and establish delegation of authority.
- Review policies related to restricting travel (domestic or foreign) for employees going to or leaving affected areas.
- Communicate need to prepare for widespread outbreak and to prepare accordingly.

Consider providing additional protection to individuals who identify themselves as high risk (pregnant women, persons with compromised immune systems due to other medical conditions, persons age 65 or greater) by reducing their social contact or increasing the flexibility of worksite or hours.

Program Offices/Field Elements

- DOE follows State Department and CDC travel recommendations.
- Advise employees who return from a location for which a travel advisory exists to stay home, and if possible, telework.

Supervisors

Travel	If there is a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel whave to take sick or annual leave until able to return to work.				
	Limit non-essential travel.				
Meetings Conferences	 Limit face-to-face meetings; keep individuals 6 feet apart Encourage teleconferencing. 				
СООР	 Review and update COOP plan, including section on pandemic planning, if applicable. 				
	Facilities				
Facilities	 Ensure that procedures are in place to sanitize offices. Ensure that custodial personnel are familiar with universal precautions and procedures to avoid cross contamination. Ensure that restrooms remain well stocked with supplies. Be prepared to have hand sanitation mechanisms/supplies at entrances and cafeterias/snack bars. Post signs to encourage personal preparedness and disease prevention. No change to the operation of ventilation systems is recommended. Make arrangements to allow for increased frequency or depth of cleaning especially for objects frequently touched by many people, such as doorknobs and handrails. 				
Custodial Crews	 Ensure that universal precautions against blood-borne pathogens are in place for cleaning restrooms or offices in which an individual has been sick. Ensure that Material Safety Data Sheets are available for cleaning/sanitizing solutions. Ensure that employees are following procedures for proper handling and use of chemicals. Prevent tendency to use more than necessary or to mix chemicals. 				
Offices in General	 No changes are recommended for office operations and/or cleaning schedules. 				
Offices of Sick Individuals	Wipe desks, phones, and keyboards with a sanitizing solution or wipe.				
Food Service Snack Bars	 Ensure that food sanitation procedures are in place. Consider installing hand sanitizers at entrances for patrons. 				
	Child Care Centers				
Child Care Centers	 Ensure Centers are following their pandemic plans. Encourage parents to develop back up plans for the care of their sick children or in the event that their child care center is closed. 				

	Health Care Facilities
Health Care Facilities	 Ensure health care providers are working in compliance with their pandemic plan and CDC guidance. Provide educational materials regarding influenza. Keep aware of the number of cases within your State or local area. Review information and guidance on HHS website: http://www.hss.energy.gov/HealthSafety/pandemic.html or CDC www.flu.gov, or WHO websites Consider the purchase and stockpiling of antiviral medication. Initiate dialogue with State Health Department regarding procurement of pre-pandemic or pandemic vaccines for employees with mission essential functions. Maintain stock of universal protective materials (gloves, masks, disinfectants, etc) Employees reporting to the health care facility with flu-like symptoms should be advised to go home and seek medical care. A facemask may be issued and recommended to be worn until symptoms subside. Replenish stocks of protective materials as needed. Consider purchase of specialized supplies for first responders and staff with close patient contact. Initiate surveillance in accordance with CDC, Department of Homeland Security or DOE recommendations. Initiate vaccine programs if vaccine is available.
	Security Forces
Security Forces	 Follow recommended actions listed in "Employees" section above. Ensure hand-gel is placed at a visible and accessible location at reception areas. Wipe down equipment that is frequently shared, such as hand-held detector wands, and computer keyboards, with disinfectant wipe or spray. Facemask use is not recommended for protective forces in contact with the general employee population.

Level 3 Pandemic Situation Increased and sustained transmission in general population Community incidence or site absenteeism 35- 40 percent

Responsibility	Recommended Actions				
	Employees				
General Employee Population	 Focus on personal preparedness and disease prevention to yourself or others. Exercise, eat a healthy diet, and get plenty of sleep. Follow CDC guidelines on hand-washing (at least 20-30 seconds with soap or an alcohol-based hand gel). Wash your hands frequently. Cover your cough or sneezes appropriately, then wash your hands or use hand gel. Use a tissue or paper towel to open restroom door handles and to turn on/off faucets. If you or anyone who lives with you has flu-like symptoms call your doctor or other medical provider. Do not come to work sick! If possible, telework; discuss telework options with supervisor. Review sick leave and family leave options. Use sick leave as needed, plan to remain at home 24 hours after your fever returns to normal (without the use of medications). If your doctor or other health care provider confirms or suspects H1N1 influenza, inform your supervisor. Plan an annual seasonal influenza immunization. Sign a telework agreement and get an RSA token if you are eligible to work from home, if not already completed. Develop a family response plan, including communicating or providing care for elderly or distant relatives. See Department of Homeland Security, Red Cross, or community websites. Avoid mass transportation during peak hours. If you experience anxiety, contact your local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) office. Prepare your home with extra food, water, medicine, toiletries, pet supplies to cover at least two weeks as for any emergency situation. 				
Shared Equipment	 Viruses do not typically last a long time on solid surfaces; however, it is always good practice to wipe surfaces of shared equipment periodically with a sanitizing wipe or solution. For shared phones, consider individual headsets. 				
Office Water Coolers	 It is always good practice to sanitize stand-alone, office-type water coolers between water bottle replacements. Companies have instructions on their websites to sanitize coolers. Do not touch drinking cups, mouths, or water bottles to water fountain spigots. 				
Team Sports Fitness Centers	Cancelled				

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- Ensure employees are informed about pandemic planning and preparedness.
- Ensure that notification lists are up-to-date.
- Review your local pandemic plan and discuss with employees.
- Verify appropriate telework agreements are in place for employees
- Review the advisability of subordinates teleworking if they become sick or anyone who lives with them becomes sick.
- Keep aware of anyone who is confirmed or suspected to have H1N1.
- Consider IT access issues such as RSA tokens, if applicable, for employees who are eligible to work from home.
- Understand Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)/Privacy rules.
- Contact your human resource staff for guidelines regarding sick leave and family leave policies.
- Keep your management chain and human resources staff (at Headquarters, administrative staff) aware of anyone who is suspected or confirmed with influenza
- If there is a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel will have to take sick or annual leave until able to return to work.
- Have signed telework agreements in place for eligible employees, if not already completed.
- Encourage employees to apply for RSA tokens, if not already completed.
- Consider social distancing:
- Implement staggered work schedules;
- limit the number of people in meetings dependent on the size and layout of the room (try to keep people 3 6 feet apart);
- Encourage conference calls and televideo meetings.
- Plan to have essential workers backed up "3-deep" by cross-training and establish delegation of authority.
- Review policies related to restricting travel (domestic or foreign) for employees going to or leaving affected areas.
- Communicate need to prepare for widespread outbreak and to prepare accordingly
- Consider providing additional protection to individuals who identify themselves as high risk (pregnant women, persons with compromised immune systems due to other medical conditions, persons age 65 or greater) by reducing their social contact or increasing the flexibility of worksite or hours.
- Expect a large number of employees to be absent due to illness or care of family members.
- Plan on 6-8 week contingency operations.
- Ensure essential functions are maintained.
- Consider relocation and re-distribution of staff.
- Consider issuing a site-wide evacuation order whereby the site executes its COOP.

Supervisors

	Program Offices/ Field Elements
Travel	 DOE follows State Department and CDC recommendations. Advise employees who return from a location for which a travel advisory exists to stay home, and if possible, telework. If there is a CDC travel advisory, Federal employees who were on official travel may be authorized to use up to 3 days of excused absence/administrative leave. Employees who were on personal travel will have to take sick or annual leave until able to return to work. Limit non-essential travel.
Meetings Conferences	 Keep individuals 3 - 6 feet apart. Suspend non-essential meetings. Use teleconferencing.
СООР	 Review and update COOP plan, including section on pandemic planning, if applicable. Prepare to activate COOP, if warranted.
	Facilities
Facilities	 Ensure that procedures are in place to be able to sanitize offices. Make arrangements to allow for increased frequency or depth of cleaning. Ensure that custodial personnel are familiar with universal precautions and procedures to avoid cross contamination. Ensure that restrooms remain well stocked with supplies. Be prepared to have hand sanitation mechanisms/supplies at entrances and cafeterias/snack bars. Post signs to encourage personal preparedness and disease prevention. No change to the operation of ventilation systems is recommended. Make arrangements to allow for increased frequency or depth of cleaning especially for objects frequently touched by many people, such as doorknobs and handrails. There is no evidence to support the efficacy of widespread disinfection of the antisyment or air.
Custodial Crews	 Ensure that universal precautions against blood-borne pathogens are in place for cleaning restrooms or offices in which an individual has been sick. Ensure that Material Safety Data Sheets are available for cleaning/sanitizing solutions. Ensure that employees are following procedures for proper handling and use of chemicals. Prevent tendency to use more than necessary or to mix chemicals.
Offices in General	Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands (keyboards, phones, personal items) should be disinfected at least daily by employees.

Offices of sick individuals	Wipe desks, phones, and keyboards with a sanitizing solution or wipe.				
Food Service Snack Bars	 Ensure that food sanitation procedures are in place. Consider installing hand sanitizers at entrances for patrons. 				
	Child Care Centers				
Child Care Centers	 Ensure Centers are following their pandemic plans Encourage parents to develop back up plans for the care of their sick children or in the event that their child care center is closed. Consider closure of child care centers following guidance from State Health Departments/Board of Education for your area 				
	Health Care Facilities				
Health Care Facilities	 Ensure health care providers are working in compliance with their pandemic plan and CDC guidance. Provide educational materials regarding influenza. Keep aware of the number of cases within your State or local area. Review information and guidance on HHS website: http://www.hss.energy.gov/HealthSafety/pandemic.html or CDC www.flu.gov or WHO websites. Consider the purchase and stockpiling of antiviral medication. Initiate dialogue with State Health Department regarding procurement of vaccines for employees with mission essential functions. Maintain stock of universal protective materials (gloves, masks, disinfectants, etc). Employees reporting to the health care facility with flu-like symptoms should be advised to go home and seek medical care. A facemask may be issued and recommended to be worn until symptoms subside. Replenish stocks of protective materials as needed. Consider purchase of specialized supplies for first responders and staff with close patient contact. Initiate surveillance in accordance with CDC, Department of Homeland Security or DOE recommendations. Initiate vaccine programs if vaccine is available. Consider the purchase of anti-viral medication for essential personnel. Initiate discussion with State Health Department regarding the procurement of pre-pandemic or pandemic vaccine. 				

	Security Forces
Security Forces	 Follow recommended actions listed in "Employees" section above. Ensure hand-gel is placed at a visible and accessible location at reception areas. Wipe down equipment that is frequently shared, such as hand-held detector wands, and computer keyboards, with disinfectant wipe or spray. Facemask use is not recommended for protective forces in contact with the general employee population. Restrict the number of visitor entrances to ensure adequate number of security personnel.