



FAQs About Swine Flu in the Workplace

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A year ago at this time, it seemed that every other phone call or e-mail I received from a client was a question about layoffs and downsizing. This fall, the main questions coming my way have been about swine flu (also known as H1N1).

What can we do today to prepare for a swine-flu outbreak tomorrow?

The CDC has issued helpful guidance that all employers should review as soon as possible by visiting the agency's Web site. Some recommendations include:

- Establishing a plan for dealing with a possible outbreak, including educating managers and employees about your policies and procedures, communicating with your employees regarding your expectations of them, and offering resources to answer employee questions.
- Determining what your company's normal seasonal absenteeism rate has been in the past so that you can effectively monitor any developments this year and accurately determine if you are being impacted by an outbreak.
- Informing your employees that they should stay home if they feel sick, and developing flexible leave policies to allow your employees to either work from home or take time off to care for family members.
- Educating your employees about your new requirements this flu season, such as protocol for washing hands and using hand sanitizer, etc.
- Identifying your essential business functions, jobs and roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (such as raw materials, suppliers, subcontractors, logistics, etc.) that are needed to maintain normal business operations, and developing a plan for operation in the event that any of them are interrupted.

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