

## [Company] Pandemic Flu Policy

As an employer, our company has a responsibility to protect employee safety and health. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our employees know what is expected of them in the event of a serious worldwide or national influenza outbreak.

### **Pandemic description**

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads worldwide easily from person-to-person.

A worldwide pandemic could have a major effect on the U.S. construction industry, other businesses worldwide, and our national economy. A pandemic could affect as many as 40 percent of the workforce during periods of peak influenza illness. Employees could be absent because they are sick, must care for sick family members or for children if schools and day-care centers are closed, or are afraid to come to work.

Unlike natural disasters or terrorist events, an influenza pandemic will be widespread, affecting multiple areas of United States and other countries at the same time. A pandemic will also be an extended event, with possible multiple waves of outbreaks in the same geographic area; each outbreak could last 6 to 8 weeks and may occur over a year or more. It is unlikely that our employees will be free from potential exposure to the influenza.

### **Company policy**

This policy is not designed to frighten you. However, it is prudent for our executive management to inform you of the potential hazards and ways that you can avoid exposure. The intent is to provide a safe work environment for you, to prevent the spread of an influenza virus in the office and within your families and to ensure our company's financial security, which is important to all staff members.

Every staff member has a responsibility to themselves and fellow employees to take action to prevent the influx and spread of influenza within the office. You will be required to follow this disaster plan in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak.

This emergency policy will go into effect in the event of an influenza pandemic outbreak. All staff members are required to abide by this policy when directed by the company president or chief executive officer.

## Company pandemic influenza emergency plan

Our company will implement a national emergency sick leave policy for employee compensation and sick leave that will be administered by company executives in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak.

- First and foremost, the purpose of this plan will be to attempt to protect employees from contracting influenza in the workplace.
- Second, this plan will provide employees with adequate financial security by enabling them to work in the office safely or work from home.
- Third, a plan to remotely work at home ensures the company and your financial security by providing the continuation of services during a national emergency.

Employee risks of occupational exposure to influenza during a pandemic may vary from high, medium, or lower risk. The level of risk depends in part on whether or not jobs require close proximity to people potentially infected with pandemic influenza virus. Lower exposure risk occupations are those that do not require contact with people known to be infected with pandemic virus or frequent close contact (within 6 feet) of the public.

Even though our company would most likely be considered to be at a lower risk level, employers have been instructed by OSHA and the CDC to be cautious and develop preparedness plans to minimize employee infections.

**Stay at home.** During a pandemic influenza outbreak, as determined by the state or federal government, employees who have flu-like symptoms (fever, dry cough, sore throat, sore muscles, stuffy/runny nose, headache) are required to stay at home. Use your provided sick leave and see your doctor. It is important to your health and to your family, friends and other employees that you seek medical attention within the first couple of days. Do not come into the office or jobsite where you could expose other employees and their families. For the sake of staff members and their families, employees who enter the company office or arrive at a jobsite with flu-like symptoms will be immediately sent home.

**Absenteeism policy.** There are no legal requirements for paid sick leave beyond the normal company sick leave policy. If you have used all your sick leave for the year and have not banked days from previous years or vacation time the company is not obligated by law to provide sick pay. Our company leadership realizes that everybody will need financial security during a national emergency therefore during a pandemic outbreak. Our executive leaders will take the situation under consideration if you are out due to an extended bout of illness and do not have any sick days or vacation days left to use. The worse-case scenario will be that unpaid sick leave without reprisal will be available during a pandemic outbreak.

**Remote work opportunities.** Some employees may be capable of performing most or all work assignments from home in the event of outbreak. Working at home will reduce your potential exposure to the influenza, and allow those employees who may need to take care of their children due to school closings or possibly a sick family member. Our company leadership will discuss this possibility and potential opportunities to work at home with each employee.

**Influenza safety supplies.** Supplies in the form of latex/nitrile disposable gloves, N-95 particulate respirators, antibacterial hand sanitizer, and tissues as well as disinfectants and/or antibacterial cleaning supplies and disposable towels for cleaning work surfaces will be stockpiled by the company for your use

while working in the office or jobsite, should the need arise. All staff members will be instructed in their use.

**Training.** All staff members will receive training in reference to this policy and exposure control. This training will include the signs and symptoms of influenza virus, how to prevent exposure and transmission of viruses, the reasons for staying home from work when sick, how to use the influenza safety supplies.

**Travel policy.** All travel activities will be terminated and future travel activities postponed until the pandemic influenza outbreak is officially declared ended by the government. As soon as an outbreak is declared all company employees who are traveling will terminate activities and are required to immediately arrange for and return to their home base as soon as it is reasonably possible. For the health and safety of these employees there will be no exceptions to this requirement.

## **Prevention**

There are common-sense ways that people can reduce the possibility of an influenza infection:

- ❖ **Good hygiene.** Start by washing your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water frequently or by using alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products. Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes if your hands are not clean.
- ❖ **Practice cough etiquette.** Cover your mouth with a tissue and cough into the tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Stay clear of anybody who is coughing or sneezing. Be sure to educate family members and children and make sure they have a supply of tissues handy or know how to cough into their elbow, not their hands.
- ❖ **Social distancing.** Reduce the frequency, proximity, and duration of contact between people. Working, commuting, shopping, etc. during off hours is also a form of social distancing.
- ❖ **Appliance controls.** Do not use other person's telephones, keyboards, desks or appliances without first disinfecting the appliance or surface with an antiviral cleaning wipe/product.
- ❖ **Use Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).** During an outbreak wear a respirator and disposable gloves when you are in public or must be around environments where you could be exposed to persons who are or may be infected with a virus. If you think you are ill and must be around other people wear a respirator so you do not spread the virus.
- ❖ **Stay home.** Stay home from work and away from other persons when you are ill.
- ❖ **See a doctor.** Seek professional medical attention as soon as you think you may be ill. The longer you wait the greater the chance of serious illness.
- ❖ **Flu shots.** Get your seasonal influenza vaccine, unless prevented to do so because of allergies or other health reasons.

## Basic influenza information

Influenza is commonly known as the flu, which is a virus infection. There are differences between seasonal flu and pandemic flu:

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates	Occurs rarely. The 20 <sup>th</sup> century only had three pandemics—1918, 1957, and 1968. The last time a pandemic was declared was in 2010 for the H1N1 virus.)
Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure	No previous exposure; little or no preexisting immunity
Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications; the very young, the elderly, and those with certain underlying health conditions at increased risk for serious complications	Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications
Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs	Health systems may be overwhelmed
Vaccine developed based on known flu strains and available for annual flu season	Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic
Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available	Effective antivirals may be in limited supply
Average US deaths approximately 36,000/yr from the flu	Number of deaths could be high
Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia	Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent
Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouraging people who are sick to stay home)	May cause major impact on society (e.g., widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)
Manageable impact on domestic and world economy	Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

Flu viruses spread in respiratory droplets caused by coughing or sneezing. The flu viruses are also known to be spread when a person makes contact with a contaminated surface such as a infected persons hand,

countertop, desk, telephone, keyboard and any other surface that respiratory droplets may contact and then the person touches his or her mouth, nose, or eyes.

Most healthy adults may be able to infect others one day before the virus symptoms appear and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means a person can pass on the flu to someone else before they know and while they are sick. Viruses can be spread very easily through an office, while commuting, in the home, while shopping and in any environment where people come together.

With the increase in global travel, as well as urbanization, and overcrowded conditions, epidemics due to a new flu virus are likely to take hold quickly and spread worldwide equally quickly, which is why the World Health Organization (**who.int**), Center for Disease Control (CDC) (**cdc.gov**), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (**osha.gov**) are concerned in early 2020 about a possible influenza pandemic, if a current serious flu virus first detected in China starts spreading from human-to-human.

Although some scientists do not agree, many experts believe that it is not a matter of *if* a pandemic will occur again on our planet; it is a matter of *when*.

Additional information regarding workplace and family safety in a pandemic can be found on this CDC website:

[www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm)

#### **Current flu virus news: 2020 Corona virus**

The Centers for Disease Control tracks the 2020 Corona virus for U.S. public health authorities and provides expert advice for those living in the United States:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The World Health Organization has an informative webpage on the status of the 2020 Corona virus outbreak across the globe:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>