



A health and safety bulletin from

UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA

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Influenza Season—2009

The spread of the H1N1 influenza virus worldwide and the World Health Organization's raising of the pandemic alert level in June signify that a global pandemic is officially underway. The virus, which has also been called swine influenza A, is infecting humans in North America, and ongoing human-to-human transmission is occurring. Experts anticipate that this new virus will cause illness along with the regular seasonal influenza viruses. Symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu—fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. According to the CDC, "It is expected that most people will recover without needing medical care."

The severity of illness obviously cannot be predicted with much certainty, so employers should develop a flexible response and a plan that can be refined if an H1N1 outbreak evolves into a more serious situation during the fall and winter. National and state health organizations have been developing recommendations and resources for response planning, partnering with health organizations and officials, implementing leave policies, and other topics.

CDC - www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance/

Flu.gov (Workplace Planning) - www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html

Flu.gov (Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Business and Employers) - www.flu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/toolkit.html

Revised Standard for Walking Surfaces

ASTM F1637 is intended to provide safe walking surfaces, including floors, walkway surfaces, sidewalks, short-flight stairs, and gratings. It covers design and construction guidelines and minimum maintenance criteria for new and existing buildings and structures. The 2009 version of the standard is now available in print or PDF format.

ASTM International (F1637-09) - www.astm.org/Standards/F1637.htm?A

New TB Test

Faster results, fewer false positives and other positive features have caused the University Hygienic Lab to offer physicians and health agencies an alternative to the traditional tuberculosis skin test (PPD test). The interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) blood test also requires only one visit, rather than the multi-week incubation period of a PPD.

IDPH (EPI Update-Aug 14) - www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epi_updates/epi_update_081409.pdf

Fatal Work Injuries—2008

The National Census Of Fatal Occupational Injuries recorded 5,071 fatal work injuries in 2008, down from 5,657 reported for 2007. These preliminary results represent the smallest annual total since the CFOI program was first conducted in 1992. Final results for 2008 will be released in April.

CFOI - www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).