

TRANSNEWS

Safety Tips

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Preparing Your Workplace for a Possible H1N1 Pandemic

This spring's swine flu scare might have been just a warm-up act for a far more serious flu pandemic this fall. If you took steps to prepare your workplace for an outbreak in April, dust off those plans and check them against our list of things to do to make sure your organization keeps running in the coming months.

If enough people become infected, H1N1 flu (also known as swine flu) could seriously affect many employers' operations.

The facts are straightforward: H1N1 influenza isn't yesterday's news. The so-called swine flu is flourishing right now as winter grips the Southern Hemisphere. Australia and Argentina have been particularly hard-hit.

Once flu season arrives here in the United States, it could be too late to implement last-minute business-continuity plans.

You should begin pandemic planning now. Properly implemented, it can help limit the flu's impact on employee health—and the economic health of your organization.

A host of possible problems

It's usually difficult to plan for a crisis and respond to it thoughtfully while it's occurring. That's why planning now is so important. You'll be able to act quickly should the need arise.

Because each business is unique, you must customize your pandemic plan to your

particular workforce and business-continuity needs. However, several practical issues may affect almost every employer.

- **Attendance could nose-dive.** Some employees may be unable to work because they are sick. Others may stay away from work because they fear becoming infected.

- **The workplace might become contagious.** Ill employees may insist on coming to work—because they need the income—even if they should stay home.

- **Alternative work arrangements might be needed.** You might need to consider having employees work remotely if authorities impose quarantines or employees refuse to or cannot come to your facilities. If you don't already, consider cross-training employees to perform critical functions.

- **Some employees may refuse to perform some of their regular duties** because they fear being exposed to the flu. Those who travel frequently or attend large meetings may balk.

- **Some employees may not seek health care** for financial reasons or out of fear of exposure at the doctor's office.

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New & Improved Safety Tips

Welcome to the new format of **SAFETY TIPS**.

In the past we have geared the newsletter to your employees. Now, it's your turn, too!

In every issue we will try to include current or pertinent items for management, drivers and general workplace health and safety.

Tell us what you like or what you don't like, if there are any topics you would like to see us cover or features you would like to see added.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts, and we hope you look forward to hearing from us!

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Flu
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- **Employees may need personal assistance.** It might involve finding care for a sick relative. They may need help obtaining food, water or cash during a quarantine.
- **Employees may be unable to focus on work** (or work at all) due to the emotional fall-out of a pandemic. They may need time off, counseling or other assistance.

Your obligations as an employer

As they plan for a pandemic, employers face competing and complicated legal issues.

Employers are legally obligated to provide a safe workplace. In the face of a pandemic, you may be liable if your infected employees spread the disease.

Your best defense will originate in the prevention and response measures you include in your pandemic plan. It should include:

- **A communicable disease policy.**

Emphasize that employees with flu symptoms must not come to work.

- **Employee education on how to prevent spreading the flu.** Good hygiene is the key. Remind employees to cover their mouths when they cough and their noses when they sneeze. Throw out used tissues immediately. Wash hands frequently, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- **Other measures to prevent the spread of disease at work.** Employers can reduce the risk of workplace infection by providing air ventilation and purifying systems, restricting travel and implementing remote or other work arrangements to reduce personal contact.

Of course, there is no way to anticipate all contingencies, but an employer's reasonableness often plays a key role in defending against legal claims.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers an online [Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist](#) that can help you audit your readiness to deal with swine flu.

Tell Me A Story

Before writing was invented, before the first cave painting appeared on a rock wall, humans learned from stories. For thousands of years, storytelling has remained a vital part of cultural discovery and understanding.

When it comes to safety in the workplace, the story always has been an important communication device for illustrating the severity of hazards. Stories frequently are used in training and as precautionary lessons for new and young workers who are learning the ropes. One of the things that stories do very effectively is share experiences. When you are working in an environment that is very dangerous, the last thing you want is people experiencing bad things first hand. Stories help them learn about dangers without being exposed to them.

When workers start a new job they are

often bombarded with information which they don't always process well. Rules and procedures can be difficult to remember and retain especially written guidelines, charts or statistics.

Getting through to employees during training requires instructors to convey meaningful information in a way that makes an impression on their audience. That means knowing the subject you are presenting and who you are presenting it to, then creating a picture best suited your their audience. Most people are visual listeners, when you tell a story the brain makes pictures as you go along.

A story doesn't have to give people every single detail of an event; it simply has to give the right details.

Stories can be told in a variety of ways as long as they are relevant to your

topic. Some tales might be humorous, others may be sad, but they must break down the barrier between the instructor and the listener to be successful.

Trainers aren't the only people who frequently use stories to make a point about safety. In many dangerous occupations an oral tradition exists among workers.

Every workplace has potential stories that can help teach safety. The key is for management to listen to workers and respect their experiences. If supervisors sit down and talk to employees, the employees will almost always share their stories.

Stories raise awareness about dangers by painting powerful mental images. These images stay with workers and alter the way they perform their jobs.

Safety Tips



Don't Speed!

Driving at a higher than reasonable speed increases your risk of having an accident in two ways: it cuts your reaction time and results in more "stored" energy (that must be dissipated in any collision). You should consider if the risks are worth the gain.

This is the science of math and physics—you cannot bend these rules. Each incremental increase in speed reduces your ability to react in time to hazards, because you may be covering distance in less time than it takes to react. Normal reaction time is

between .75 second and 1.5 seconds, on average. Average reaction time distance at 50 mph would be approximately 83 feet. At 70 mph, it is over 115 feet (over 7 modern car lengths). These numbers do not include braking distance, just reaction time. The average difference in reaction-time distance from 50 mph to 70 mph is about 32 feet. If you were relying solely on braking, any hazard you encounter within the reaction distance is already a problem; you can't react quickly enough to miss it. This is par-

ticularly important at night, when darkness restricts your visibility. Do you know at what distance your headlights will illuminate a hazard? How is your night vision these days? When headlights finally light up a road hazard, it is often too late to avoid it. Many experts would tell you that even 50 mph is too fast for conditions at night, on any dark roadway.

If you could choose the speed at which to hit a brick wall, assuming that it was a sure thing you were going to hit one,



would you choose to hit the wall at 10 mph or at 100 mph? Not hard to decide, is it? Higher speeds also bring additional accumulated, or stored, energy. More stored energy means increased crash forces if you hit something. Here's a real-world example; a loaded semi traveling at 60 mph develops about 6.5 MILLION foot-pounds of force. Or, your body, unrestrained in the vehicle, could hit the windshield with about 16,000 foot-pounds of force, should your vehicle hit some immovable object - like a tree.

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Look Ahead

Don't just look directly in front of you when driving. Instead scan as far as possible down the roadway to identify potential trouble spots and stopped or slowing traffic. Interstate highways will many times permit you to scan at least a mile down the road. On two-lane highways, scan to the next hill or curve.

City driving should be scanned at least three blocks in front of you.

Looking ahead will help you prepare to brake and/or get in the correct lane to avoid problems and prevent rear-end collisions. It will also improve your fuel economy and prolong the life of your brakes by allowing you to slow your vehicle sooner.

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Speed
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A defensive driver chooses a speed matching traffic as closely as possible without exceeding speed limits. If traffic is moving at higher speed than you should go, keep to the right and out of the way. This is often a legal requirement as well, if you are traveling at a speed less than the flow of traffic. Also, don't neglect to maintain the correct following distance.

Consider that speeding often doesn't save much time. How many times have you reached a red light, only to find a "jackrabbit" waiting there that passed you a half mile back like you were standing still? Ever wonder why? Around most urban areas, signals limit overall speeds to what the system can handle (in terms of numbers of vehicles). Drive faster than that and you'll simply spend more time waiting at red lights, wasting fuel, wearing down brake pads, and accumulating just a

little more stress in your life for no good reason or gain. Even on the highway, you don't often gain much. Frequently, once you pass someone, you find them on your back bumper as you slow down to enter the next town. So you gained what, exactly? On an Interstate, where you truly can save some time by speeding (provided you don't get pulled over), the difference between 65 mph and 80 mph over 50 miles is only 8.7 minutes. *Big deal.*

A Child's Eye View

Children do not see things like we do. To understand why traffic situations look different to young children, walk out to the curb and drop to your knees. What do you see? Parked vehicles are blocking your view. You can't see oncoming vehicles. Imagine now that you really are only this tall, and that you step out into the street.

How Children see the World

The point of this exercise is to remind you of an important fact that you may have overlooked: A child is not a small adult. Children, for instance, have on-third less peripheral vision than adults. They can't see approaching vehicles out of the corner of their eyes. Nor can they judge such things as distance, the speed of vehicles or gaps in traffic.

Children can't always discern whether something is moving. That is why it is important to remind them to look left, then right, then left again. In their minds, a vehicle appears frozen in time and space when they first look left. They have to learn that the vehicle is moving by looking left again.

Fantasy Vs. Reality

Children have trouble separating what is real and not real. Often they see cars as living creatures. They don't understand death. When watching cartoons, kids readily accept the fact that the Road Runner bounces back to life after it is run over by a steamroller. They tend to believe that the same things can happen in real life.

Children assume that, because they can see the driver, the driver sees them. When 5-to-6 year olds were asked what would happen if a car was about to hit them some responded: "I would hold up my hand and stop it."

They Take it Literally

Children interpret traffic signs in literal ways that may mislead them. They believe a "Children Crossing" sign means it is okay to walk across the street.

Sometimes a child will get confused by the yellow light. He may think it merely means to be careful, not grasping its warning that the light is about to turn red. A child may ex-

plain it by saying something like, "When I am in the car with Mommy we always go through the yellow light faster."

It is difficult for a child to tell where a particular sound is coming from. They may be distracted by a friend's call or a barking dog. And, even if they hear a warning sound, they may misinterpret its meaning. When a driver honks his horn, they may take it as a go ahead to cross the street.

Not a Small Adult

Until children reach the age of 8 or 9, they are unable to make logical, life-saving decisions. They need to receive their traffic training in small digestible chunks. Never assume any knowledge on their part.

A child is not a small grown-up. We must make the effort to enter the realm of the child's mind and try to understand how he or she looks at the world in order to teach children the vital lessons of traffic safety.

Drive defensively and watch out for the mistakes that children make. We need to protect them, as well as teach them to take care of themselves.

Safety Tips



Which Cartoon Character Are You?

Have you ever watched a Saturday morning cartoon and found yourself laughing because one of the characters reminded you of someone you knew, or even of yourself? At times, the workplace can be similar to a cartoon. Some characters (co-workers and supervisors) you admire and others get under your skin. While you can't change other people's behavior, with a little effort you can make a big impact on your own. To ensure that you're a workplace hero and not a villain, check out the examples below.

Level-Headed Wilma Flintstone

The red-headed wife of Fred Flintstone is known for her good judgment and for bailing

Fred out when his crazy schemes go awry. Wilma is reliable and thinks things through before making big decisions. She also isn't afraid to speak her mind when the time is right.

If you tend to make decisions with a calm, cool and collected state of mind, you may be a workplace Wilma. While Wilma isn't usually the center of attention, that's actually a good thing. She avoids chaos and interpersonal conflict by thinking before she acts.

Perhaps, however, you have a knack for getting into binds and would like to become more like Wilma. By taking a moment to think through the potential consequences of your

actions, you can often avoid disaster. For example, when you have what you think is a great idea, try talking about it with your co-workers before acting. Other tactics to improve your decision-making skills are writing lists of pros and cons and taking at least a day to think over big decisions.

Gloomy Eeyore

Remember the downcast donkey from Winnie-the-Pooh? Eeyore was forever feeling sorry for himself and expecting the worst. While a pessimistic stuffed donkey may



be cute, in real life, those who are always looking on the down side of things aren't so endearing.

If you spend a lot of time complaining or worrying about what might go wrong, people may perceive you as a workplace Eeyore.

You can improve your outlook by spending time with people who tend to see the glass half full. Also, avoid gripe fests – these will only make you feel more negative about your
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Novel H1N1: How to Practice Prevention

As Novel H1N1 (swine flu) continues to spread, experts, from the Centers for Disease Control to the World Health Organization to neighborhood doctors, are echoing the call for everyone to practice smart flu prevention techniques. Here are 10 ways to keep your body boosted and your immune system ready to fight infection.

Wash Your Hands and wash

them often, in hot soapy water, and for the amount of time it takes you to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (15-20 seconds).

Get Enough Sleep This means slightly different things to different people, but try to get 8 hours of good rest each night to keep your immune system in top flu-fighting shape.

Keep Hydrated Drink 8-10 8-

oz. glasses of water each day to flush toxins from your system and maintain good moisture and mucous production in your sinuses.

Eat Immune-Boosting Foods Keeping your body strong, nourished, and ready to fight infection is important in flu prevention. Fatty foods can slow your metabolism, make

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Character
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situation. To escape being seen as a perpetual naysayer, focus on what's right with a situation and only offer criticism when you have a positive solution.

Diplomatic Papa Smurf

The father figure and leader of the little blue smurfs was Papa Smurf. Whenever the smurfs would get into arguments with each other, he helped smooth things over. He also protected the group from outside harm and provided wisdom.

Are you a natural leader who seeks the good of the team? One of the traits of great leaders is the ability to unite a group.

To develop your inner Papa Smurf, become a workplace peacemaker. Don't join in on gossip but instead work toward helping your teammates see the

good in each other. When you seek to unite those around you, your co-workers will come to respect you as a trusted advisor.

Hot-Tempered Donald Duck

Disney's classic character is lovable and friendly, but is also notorious for his hair-trigger temper. When things don't go Donald's way, he blows up. He also tends to be stubborn – once he's determined his direction, there's no turning back.

When things get bumpy at work, is your first



reaction to get upset? If so, consider how your outbursts may affect your relationships with co-workers and supervisors. People tend to avoid collaborating with co-workers known for red hot tempers. To help get a handle on a short fuse, try using the following techniques.

- *Take a walk.* When something gets your blood boiling, step away from the situation for a few minutes and get some fresh air.
- *Count to 10.* The classic tip of counting to 10 while taking slow, deep breaths may sound cliché, but it's surprisingly effective for diffusing anger.
- *Talk it out.* Talking about a problem while focusing on positive solutions can help to get an issue off your mind. Just make sure talking doesn't degrade into ranting.

"It's All About Me" Garfield

The humorous orange tabby cat named Garfield is known for his love of lasagna and sleeping but he's equally notorious for his dislike of Mondays and a grey kitten named Nermal. Garfield tends to be quite selfish and is usually unwilling to sacrifice for others.

As a lazy cartoon cat, Garfield gets lots of laughs. However, self-centered slackers are rarely popular at work. When you feel tempted to take it easy on the job, remember that your work affects those around you.

To stay motivated, make sure you get enough sleep – otherwise you'll end up hating Mondays as much as Garfield. If you start to feel sluggish halfway through the day, go out for a breath of fresh air, stretch and eat a healthy snack to re-energize.

Cartoon characters can be brave or cowardly, logical or hair-brained, hard-working or lazy. The same is true of people. But unlike cartoon characters, you don't have to be typecast into a particular role. If you've been acting more like the classic villain, aim to be a hero this week at work by examining your attitudes and behaviors.

Flu
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you feel sluggish, and compromise your immune system. So stick with whole grains, colorful vegetables, and vitamin-rich fruits.

Avoid Alcohol In addition to being a mood depressant, alcohol is an immune suppressant that can actually decrease your resistance to viral infections like swine flu. For women, alcohol suppresses estrogen production, which further impairs the immune system. So avoid alcoholic beverages to keep your immune system strong.

Keep Physically Active Mild to moderate exercise—for example brisk walking for 30-40 minutes 3-4 times a week—supports the immune system by increasing circulation, oxygenating the body, purging toxins through sweat, and releasing tension and stress. So get moving!

Be Vigilant of Surfaces This is as much a mindfulness exercise as anything else. Be aware of what public surfaces you touch, when you've shaken hands with someone, or when you're using something like a pen that others have recently used—and don't touch your face

until you've had a chance to wash your hands.

Avoid Contact with Sick People A more blunt way to put this is, don't get spit on. Flu virus is spread when particles dispersed into the air through a cough or sneeze reaches someone else's nose. So if you're coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth (and then wash your hands), and if you have to be around someone who is sick, try to stay a few feet away from them and avoid physical contact.

Know When to Get Help Swine flu can look like regular flu, so don't feel like you necessarily are infected if you're exhibiting flu-like symptoms. But do go to your doctor if you live in an area where there are documented cases, or if your symptoms are severe.

Keep it in Perspective Stress releases hormones into our bodies that can compromise our immune systems and actually make us more susceptible to viruses like swine flu. So keep your concern and vigilance over swine flu in perspective to keep it from taking over your mind and body.