



Risk Alert Swine Flu Outbreak

The recent outbreak of swine flu in Mexico and the United States may pose difficulties for some water districts and authorities if the disease spreads widely. It has already been reported on every continent and in numerous countries. We urge you to get reliable information about this flu and make it available to your employees. Listed below are websites for reliable information about the outbreak:

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>
http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm (Q&A)
DSHS <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/swineflu/default.shtm>

We suggest a phased response to the disease as it may spread into your area. The first stage is education and awareness. Make your staff aware of the symptoms of the disease and ways to prevent contracting the disease and spreading it.

Symptoms of this flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Basic personal health measures include:

- 1) Avoid travel to those areas where the outbreak is active,
- 2) Wash your hands (and face) OFTEN with soap and water—encourage your family to do the same.
- 3) If soap and water are not available—use a waterless alcohol-based gel (at least 60% alcohol) to clean your hands periodically.
- 4) Sneeze in your upper sleeve as opposed to in your hands—if a tissue is not available.
- 5) Wash your hands (or use a gel) after sneezing.

- 6) Avoid hand to eye, mouth or nose contact.
 - 7) Consider the use of a multi-vitamin.
 - 8) Get plenty of sleep.
 - 9) Stick with your exercise regimen.
 - 10) Eat healthy
 - 11) Spend as little time as possible in large crowds or gatherings.
- If you feel ill (with the symptoms described above), please DO NOT come to work. Seek the advice and consultation of a medical professional.

The second stage response as disease is reported in your area would be to take such measures as reducing or eliminating large gatherings of people, increasing sanitization measures in your facilities, restricting travel and being very insistent about staff not coming to work if they are sick, and increasing the use of teleconference or videoconference. Consult with a medical professional about the efficacy and type of mask to use if this measure becomes necessary. The following is taken from another CDC site: *“Unless otherwise specified, the term “facemasks” refers to disposable masks cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as medical devices. This includes facemasks labeled as surgical, dental, medical procedure, isolation, or laser masks. Such facemasks have several designs. One type is affixed to the head with two ties, conforms to the face with the aid of a flexible adjustment for the nose bridge, and may be flat/pleated or duck-billed in shape. Another type of facemask is pre-molded, adheres to the head with a single elastic band, and has a flexible adjustment for the nose bridge. A third type is flat/pleated and affixes to the head with ear loops. Facemasks cleared by the FDA for use as medical devices have been determined to have specific levels of protection from penetration of blood and body fluids.”*

As always, the Texas Water Conservation Association Risk Management Fund stands ready to help you respond to this situation. Our loss control consultants are a resource for you during this outbreak. If you would like assistance, please contact Janina Flores at 1-800-580-8922.