



April 2009

Due to the recent cases of Swine Flu in Mexico and some parts of the US, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has declared a state of National Medical Emergency. While this is not a cause for panic (the same kind of action occurs when a hurricane is expected), the emergency declaration is an alert to increase awareness and take basic precautions.

According to initial reports by DHS, the Swine flu (influenza) outbreak is affecting adults and spreading through human-to-human transmissions. While there have been deaths in Mexico, to date (4/25/09) the small number of confirmed cases in the US have fully recovered

Stay informed -- Awareness is critical

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that individuals who have recently traveled to Mexico and are exhibiting influenza-like symptoms should seek medical guidance (see inset at top). The CDC is encouraging individuals in the impacted areas of California, Texas and those traveling to Mexico to take everyday preventive actions such as:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who appears sick.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school, and limit contact with others.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Stay informed and share information with your family, friends and coworkers. For more information see the Avian Flu Series in the *SFI Safety Bulletin Archives* (see inset below). Sources of official information are: CDC: 800-232-4636 and www.pandemicflu.gov.

The current flu outbreak is in Phase 3 (evidence of human to human transmission). A pandemic occurs when a serious outbreak of influenza reaches a phase where there is efficient and sustained human to human transmission. If public health officials announce that a strain of flu has progressed to Phase 4 or beyond, it will indicate that human-to-human transmission has increased, signaling a need to move to active precautions and preventive measures.

Advance awareness of preventive and precautionary measures and being prepared to use them will help to slow and contain the spread of an outbreak. See the inset box for workplace precautions in the event of a serious outbreak. If a serious outbreak affects your area, stay at home when you are sick. Check with a health care provider immediately if you think you may have the flu. Do not go out in public until you have recovered. Notify your supervisor as soon as you develop flu symptoms to allow enough time to schedule a replacement. Always follow SFI procedures related to calling-off for work and do not leave post without being properly relieved.

Flu Symptoms

Fever, loss of appetite, coughing, nausea, vomiting, lethargy, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea.

Workplace Precautions

In the event of a serious flu outbreak or pandemic, SFI will not be able to supply personal hygiene articles to all employees for the duration. All officers and staff will be expected to take personal responsibility for providing their own protective hygiene articles in the workplace; such as:

- Tissues
- Sanitary wipes (for hands, phones, etc.)
- Sealable plastic bags (zip lock) to hold used tissues and wipes until they can be disposed of properly
- Spray disinfectant (for work surfaces, etc.)
- Other protective measures as recommended by government or public health officials

Although SFI cannot logistically maintain and supply enough of these items for everyone, we will release specific work site policies and procedures, to include suggestions for specific personal hygiene articles, when the threat of an outbreak increases.

Avian Flu Series – SFI Safety Bulletin

In 2006, the *SFI Safety Bulletin* carried a special three part series on the threat of Avian Flu. Basic preparations and precautions against Avian Flu are applicable to any type of flu outbreak.

Logon to *SFI.edu* and access the *Safety Bulletin Archives* from the “Reference Downloads” link on your homepage. Look for the titles *Avian Flu: “Part I”* 9/06; “*Part II*” 10/06, and “*Part III*” 11/06.

SFI.edu – www.security-forces.com – Security Education for you 24/7/365

InfoWatch is a continuous learning resource for SFI security officers. It is intended to reinforce general security awareness in the context of overall training and post instructions.