

Topic

H1N1 Sick Leave Policies

Goals

Inform employers that well solid sick leave policies can lead to healthier workplaces in terms of staff and business.

Common Messages

- The workplace may act as a “point of spread” where employees can easily spread flu to their co-workers as well as to others in the community.
- Workers may stay home due to sickness or because a family member is sick.
- Workers may stay home to care for children if schools close.
- Any worker who has flu symptoms should stay home.
- Flexible leave policies and alternate work schedules will help prevent the spread of flu at the workplace, allow employees to continue working while limiting contact with others, help maintain continuity of operations and help people manage their health and family's needs.

Treatment

- Create policies for flexible sick leave, worksites and work hours to promote social distancing if flu conditions become severe.
- Include in the sick policy that all employees should stay home if they are sick until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- Include in the sick policy a clause allowing employees to stay home to care for sick family.
- Encourage sick employees at higher risk of complications from flu to contact their health care provider as soon as possible.
- Cross train staff to perform essential functions so business can function while staff is on sick leave to recover, take care of sick family or because schools have closed.
- Review sick leave policies frequently and keep them consistent with public health recommendations.
- Send employees home if they appear to have a flu-like illness or become sick during the work day.

Additional Resources

- CDC – Preparing for the Flu “A Communication Toolkit for Businesses and Employers; www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business
- OSHA – www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/pandemicflu/index.html
- www.flu.gov/faq/workplace_questions

