SOUTHERN ALBERTA
COMMUNITY LIVING
ASSOCIATION

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION PACKAGE

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ARE WE PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY?

How prepared is Southern Alberta Community Living Association in dealing with an Emergency situation?

SACLA has a number of long-standing safe work practices that guide staff in dealing with emergency situations.

These include the

- ❑ Fire Evacuation plan
- ❑ Designated Safe Place
- ❑ Tornado guidelines
- ❑ Emergency Response Plan
- ❑ Disaster Supply Kit
- ❑ Universal Precautions
- ❑ Emergency First Aid certification

It is recommended that you, your co-workers and the individuals you support review the Emergency Response section of the Health & Safety Manual.

Our Emergency Response plan is evaluated every three years by an external accrediting body. Our last audit (held this past March 2009) resulted in score of 86% - indicating that the accrediting body found our emergency response program in excellent shape – well constructed, well disseminated and a wide sampling of employees indicating thorough knowledge of the emergency response.

As outlined in the May 2009 Staff Newsletter, though we are certainly very proud of our outstanding result on the overall audit…a major component for our on-going commitment to safety involves increased communication venues to inform the staff of evolving hazards. The May Newsletter included a SAFE WORK practice regarding the West Nile virus. As we begin to enter the Spring season and mosquitoes begin their breeding season, we want you, your co-workers and the individuals we support to practice safe & healthy behaviours to minimize the risk of infection.

Due to two unusual emergency response situations popping up within the last few days (weather and illness), it was decided rather than waiting for the next newsletter to distribute additional information, we would distribute it as a timely response to the arising situations.

BE PREPARED FOR UNUSUAL WEATHER

Unusual weather patterns have resulted in some fairly serious spring snow storms. Many of you may remember the blizzard of the 1967 which effectively shut down the city and surrounding area for days until people could dig themselves out.

Coordinators, Team Leaders and staff are requested to review the entire Emergency Response Plan for each of the residences and to ensure and document that Disaster Supply Kit's are ready, and meet or exceed the recommendations.

Staff are encouraged to constantly monitor ongoing weather warnings. Excellent sources of information on this include:

- ❑ Television – local weather reports, weather bulletins, the Weather Network.
- ❑ Radio – local weather reports, weather warnings, road reports
- ❑ Internet – weathernetwork.ca , ama.ab.ca (this site includes good driving safety tips as well as a road report)

All staff are encouraged to not only be ready to deal with this type of emergency at work, but in your personal life as well. One of the best resources available can be found at getprepared.ca . This site has a lot of information, checklists, shopping lists, resources information etc.

If you should come across additional resources that may be of benefit to your co-workers, please forward the information to one of the members of the Health & Safety Committee.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – ALERTS

As many of you have already heard, the World Health Organization has actively been monitoring an outbreak of a new type of Swine Flu. Originally identified in Mexico, the strain has been found in Canada, United States and parts of Europe.

Southern Alberta Community Living Association has been monitoring this event since it was first publicized and will continue to do so until the threat abates. We will be following the lead of our local health authority, the provincial health authority and the Federal Health bodies.

As of the publishing of this resource, there have been about a dozed identified cases of the Swine Flu in Canada – four in Nova Scotia and two in British Columbia – most are identified as "mild cases", and not likely to cause death.

It is imperative to keep a cool head and not react to fear at this time. The media is in a bit of frenzy at the moment, and constant bombardment of "worst case" scenarios are filling the airwaves, confusing and scaring the population.

This current situation is changing on a day-by-day, moment-by-moment basis. Again, we will be constantly monitoring and adapting our Emergency Response as required. Should new procedures or practices have to be modified or introduced, you will be notified by your Coordinator or Team Leader.

The picture on the right is a copy of the most recent media release on the matter from the Government of Alberta.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FLU , A COLD & THE A STOMACH UPSET

Description	Respiratory Infection		Gastrointestinal Infection
Description / Symptoms	**Influenza**	**Common Cold**	**Stomach Upset**
Virus involved	Influenza A or B Avian or Swine	Many different kinds of viruses such as rhinovirus, coronavirus, adenovirus, etc.	Norovirus (Norwalk-like viruses) is the most common
Fever	Usually high with sudden onset and lasts 3–4 days	Sometimes	Rarely
Headache	Usually, can be severe	Rarely	Sometimes
Chills, aches, pain	Usually, and often severe	Slight	Common
Loss of appetite	Sometimes	Sometimes	Frequently – usually nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea occur as well
Cough	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely
Sniffles or sneezes	Sometimes	Usually	Rarely
Extreme tiredness	Usually – tiredness may last two or three weeks or more.	Rarely	Sometimes
Involves whole body	Usually	Never	Stomach and bowel only
Symptoms appear quickly	Yes	More gradual	Fairly quickly
Complications	Pneumonia, kidney failure, swelling of the brain and death	Sinus infection or ear infection	Dehydration

Government of Alberta

News release

Alberta

April 26, 2009

Alberta on alert for swine influenza

Media Statement

Edmonton... In light of cases of human swine flu reported in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. André Corriveau, has put the province's health system on alert, and is asking Albertans to take precautions against the influenza virus and help stop the spread of infection.

"Although we have no cases of the new influenza strain in Alberta, I have advised all Medical Officers of Health in the province to increase surveillance, and implement protocols to minimize the spread of infection," said Corriveau. "Alberta and the other provinces and territories are working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada to monitor for influenza activity related to the new strain reported in Mexico."

Staff will be taking appropriate steps to prevent the spread of infection to other patients, staff and the public.

"Everyone should take some simple precautions against the influenza virus, and help stop the spread of infection to others," said Corriveau. "We are asking anyone who develops a fever or cough and has recently returned or had contact with someone recently returned from Mexico or the southern U.S., to call HealthLink Alberta for advice before visiting a physician's office, medicentre or emergency room. All Albertans should remember to wash hands frequently with soap and warm water."

Albertans are reminded not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth after touching door handles and other surfaces that may harbour influenza and other viruses. Those with flu-like symptoms can help prevent the spread of illness by not touching surfaces directly, washing their hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose. Other important ways to reduce the spread of influenza and other viruses, include: staying home from work and avoiding public places when ill, and coughing or sneezing into your sleeve rather than your hand.

Anyone with a fever or cough associated with recent travel to Mexico or the southern U.S. can call Health Link Alberta toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465); in Edmonton, call 780-408-LINK (5465); in Calgary, call 403-943-LINK (5465).

FACT SHEET Human Swine Influenza

For more information, please contact : 1-800-454-8302

Human Swine Influenza Outbreak
Frequently Asked Questions
Fact Sheet Human Swine Influenza
Surveillance

Swine influenza
Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by the *influenza A* virus.

Human swine influenza
Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. From time to time, human infections do occur, resulting in human swine influenza. Human swine influenza is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the regular human seasonal flu.

Transmission
Sometimes, humans and animals can pass strains of flu back and forth to one another through direct close contact. When a swine influenza virus does affect a human, there is also a risk that the animal influenza can mutate and then spread directly between humans.

More investigation is needed on how easily the virus spreads between people, but it is believed that it is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza. Influenza and other respiratory infections are transmitted from person to person when germs enter the nose and/or throat.

Symptoms
Symptoms include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing, and sore throat. Some people with human swine influenza have also reported vomiting and diarrhea.

Flu shot
It is unlikely that the seasonal flu shot will provide protection against human swine influenza. The flu shot will protect against the seasonal flu, which is still circulating in Mexico.

Pandemic
Pandemic influenza is defined as a new influenza virus that spreads easily between humans and affects a wide geographic area. More information is needed to determine how easily this virus spreads.

Vaccine
A vaccine is any preparation intended to produce immunity to a disease by stimulating the production of antibodies. Canada has a plan for a vaccine to be produced domestically if a pandemic occurs, which will take about six months once the virus is identified. Enough pandemic vaccine will be produced to cover all Canadians.

Antivirals
Antivirals are drugs used for the prevention and early treatment of influenza. Two antivirals that appear to be effective in treating this illness are oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza).

FACT SHEET Human Swine Influenza – Source http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/fs-fr_swine-eng.php

Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist

When it comes to pandemic flu, it can never be too early to plan ahead for your personal health and safety. The following checklist can help individuals and families to prepare for a possible flu pandemic or other emergency situations.

Create a store of emergency supplies

In the event of a flu pandemic, some day-to-day services may be disrupted including those provided by health care facilities, banks, stores (e.g. grocery stores and pharmacies), restaurants and government offices. Stockpiling essential supplies for you and your family is a good way to prepare for this possibility. The following list provides examples of non-perishable food items, health supplies and other items you should have in your home in the event of a flu pandemic.

Food and Water	Health Supplies	Other
Bottled water - at least two liters of water per person per day	Pain relievers/fever reducers (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen)	Soap
Ready-to-eat canned meats	Stomach remedies	Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
Canned fruit	Cough and cold medicine	Flashlight
Dried fruit	Anti-diarrhea medication	Batteries
Canned vegetables	Fluids with salt and sugar	Battery powered or wind-up radio
Soup	Vitamins	Manual can opener
Protein bars	Prescribed medical supplies	Garbage bags
Dry cereal/granola	such as glucose and blood-pressure	Tissues
Peanut butter/nuts	monitoring equipment	Toilet paper
Crackers	Thermometer	Candles and matches or lighter
Canned juices	Equipment for persons with disabilities	General first aid kit
Tetra-packed milk or soy beverage		Extra keys for car and house
If applicable:		Cash and change for payphones
Canned or jarred baby food/formula		**If applicable:**
Pet food and water		Feminine hygiene products
		Disposable diapers
		Diaper wipes (in the event of a water shortage)

Quick Tips

Keep prescription medications filled. If you or anyone else in your household takes prescription medication, don't wait until it is finished to order more. Try to keep at least one month's supply on hand at all times.

Discuss care options with family members and other loved ones. If you will be bringing others into your home to care for them in the event of a flu pandemic, discuss what health supplies, special foods or other items they require. Add those items to your emergency supply list.

Fill out an Emergency Health Information sheet. Include blood type, allergies, pre-existing medical conditions and a list of current medications (type and dose) for each member of your household.

FACT SHEET Human Swine Influenza – Source http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/fs-fr_swine-eng.php

Alberta Employment and Immigration

Pandemic: What If….

Questions and Answers relating to Work

Question	Answer
Workplace Health and Safety Questions	
In the event of a pandemic, what are the employer responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Regulation* and *Code*?	Employers are required to ensure the health and safety at the workplace and should establish a plan for addressing and responding to emergency situations such as those that may arise during a pandemic.
I'm concerned about my health because my co-worker is at work with symptoms of the flu during a pandemic emergency situation. What can I do?	Every employer should have a plan to address this type of situation and if health and safety is at risk, steps must be taken to minimize the risk. At the same time, workers who are sick are also responsible to care for their own health and protect the health and safety of their co-workers. As a concerned worker, tell your supervisor, and ask about the plan that your employer has for addressing emergency situations. Workers who are ill with highly contagious and serious infections must take measures to prevent the spread to coworkers.
My co-worker has symptoms of the flu during a pandemic emergency situation. Is this "imminent danger" for the purposes of Section 35 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*?	For the purposes of Section 35 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, this would not be considered imminent danger. There are two considerations for determining imminent danger. The first is whether a hazard is dangerous and would likely cause an injury or put a worker's life at risk. The second is whether the hazard is normal for that occupation. In the case of a co-worker with the flu, neither consideration applies. While a potential exposure exists, illness may or may not ensue. Workers who are concerned with any uncontrolled hazards should discuss with the employer the steps to be taken to effectively control the hazard. Also, in a pandemic outbreak situation, the danger of contracting the flu becomes normal to all occupations. When dealing with workplace hazards, employers have the obligation to take effective steps to minimize worker exposure to the health and safety hazards.

Question	Answer
Would the health and safety legislation related to workers being competent still apply during a pandemic?	Yes, all legislated requirements would continue to apply. Part of the employer's emergency plan should address essential services, cross-training needed for the essential services, and other contingency plans.
Must an employer ensure that a worker is trained in the safe operation of the equipment that the worker is required to operate during a pandemic?	Employers will be expected to meet the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety legislation regardless of whether a pandemic exists. If an employer cannot ensure that a worker is trained in the safe operation of equipment, then the worker must not operate that equipment.
Does an employer need to involve employees in pandemic planning for the work site?	Yes. It is prudent for an employer to include employees to obtain input, hear concerns and address issues that may arise. It would also help in communicating the emergency plan to everyone.
Where do employers and workers get information about health effects and precautions related to a pandemic?	Alberta Health and Wellness provides information about health effects and preventing the spread of infection. In the event of a pandemic, Alberta Health and Wellness will lead the health sector response, and will establish a Pandemic Response Centre. It will support coordination among regional health authorities, coordinate vaccine delivery across the province, provide information, collect data on the spread of the disease in Alberta and help resolve any health care issues that may arise. Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing will lead the response regarding the non-health consequences of a pandemic, primarily through Emergency Management Alberta (EMA). EMA will communicate with municipalities, monitor the effect of the pandemic on essential services, coordinate volunteer activities and federal assistance programs and monitor the need for support among families of victims.

Question	Answer
	Each provincial government department will have contingency plans for the delivery of provincial services, and will assist Alberta Health and Wellness, Emergency Management Alberta, regional health authorities and municipalities. For additional information, go to - www.health.gov.ab.ca/influenza/pandemic.html
	Alberta Health and Wellness - http://aema.alberta.ca/ema/Business_Pandemic_checklist_final.pdf
	Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing
Is the employer required to meet first aid requirements for services when there are fewer workers on site?	Yes, the legislation still applies. First aid services and supplies are needed for the number of workers that are at the work site.
As a first aider am I responsible for providing first aid to someone who has flu symptoms?	Yes, as the designated first aider at the worksite you will be responsible for providing first aid and recording the first aid provided. Standard precautions must always be used, regardless of whether there is a pandemic. All legislated requirements still apply.
How do I protect myself from exposure to influenza at work?	The goal is to keep exposure as low as reasonably possible. Strategies to minimize exposure can include workers working altering shifts or working from home. The controls should be in the employer's plan. Alberta Health and Wellness along with your local health authority will give advice about personal protective equipment such as masks.
Is the employer obligated to provide protective equipment to workers potentially exposed to influenza pandemic at work? Does an employer need to provide respiratory protective equipment?	If a hazard exists and exposure cannot be prevented or minimized in any other way (i.e., by engineered or administrative controls), then the employer is required to provide personal protective equipment as the last line of defense to protect worker health and safety.
If respiratory protection is needed, does fit testing need to be done?	Yes.

Pandemic What If….. www.hre.gov.ab.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_PE002.pdf

Question	Answer
If wash basins are not available at work, will waterless hand cleaners be suitable?	Yes.
Employment Standards and Labour RelationsQuestions	
What provisions exist in the *Employment Standards Code* for sick leave or compassionate leaves?	The *Employment Standards Code* does not require an employer to grant sick leave, compassionate leave or bereavement leave; or provide job protection for employees who stay home from work due to illness, family illness or other family issues.
Do unionized employees have sick leave or compassionate leaves?	Collective agreements may contain various provisions for paid or unpaid leaves of absence, including sick leave or compassionate leave. Check your collective agreement.
If an employee does not go to work because of the illness of other employees and the employer fires the employee, what remedies does an employee have?	The employee could claim he or she was fired without cause and make a claim for termination pay under the *Employment Standards Code*. Employment Standards would assess each claim on its own merits. The employee could also decide to seek independent legal advice and pursue a civil claim for damages.
Are there a specific number of days of absence, without notification by the employee, after which an employer may fire that employee?	Not in the *Employment Standards Code*. This is decided by the contract of employment between the employer and the employee.
Could an employer require an employee to provide a note from a doctor to confirm absence due to illness?	The *Employment Standards Code* has no such requirement. However, an employer's policy or a collective agreement binding on an employee could contain this provision.
If an employee is fired without notice or termination pay because of a pandemic and the employer claims that the economic hardship of the pandemic justifies the action, what remedy does an employee have?	The employee could file a claim for termination pay. There are exemptions for unforeseeable and unpreventable causes that result in termination. Claims and exemptions are judged on their own merits.
Does the *Employment Standards Code* allow employers and employees to exceed the maximum hours of work in a day when urgent work is necessary, for example; where emergency medical services are needed?	Yes. Section 16 of the *Employment Standards Code*, sets the maximum hours of work in a day and unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances where the maximum daily hours may be exceeded.

Question	Answer
What legislation specifically addresses employment of emergency service personnel?	The *Labour Relations Code* prevents firefighters and employees of approved hospitals or regional health authorities from striking or being locked out. The *Public Service Employee Relations Act* prohibits an employer, a bargaining agent or employees subject to the act from striking or being locked out. The *Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act* prevents police officers from striking or being locked out
What emergency provisions exist in the *Labour Relations Code*?	Division 18 of the *Labour Relations Code* addresses public emergencies arising from a labour dispute. This provision grants the Lieutenant Governor in Council authority to order the parties back to work if a dispute threatens public safety.
During a pandemic do minimum standards of employment still apply?	Yes. Any employment conditions or agreements for lesser standards are against public policy and void.
Professions and Occupations Questions	
In the event of a pandemic emergency, can trained health care professionals not currently registered in Alberta be allowed to practice their occupation?	Each profession's regulatory organizations is responsible for ensuring that professionals are qualified to perform restricted activities identified in their legislation. You can contact the appropriate College or Professional Regulatory Organization for further information in the event of a pandemic emergency.
Can a veterinarian be allowed to assist health professionals in the event of a pandemic?	Alberta Health and Wellness would be responsible for determining what restricted activities, if any, that veterinarians or other trained professionals may be allowed to perform in the event of a pandemic emergency.

RESOURCES:

Disaster Planning:

www.getprepared.ca (Government of Canada)

Weather / Driving Information:

www.weathernetwork.com
www.ama.ab.ca (Alberta Motor Association)

Travel Advisories

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca (Public Health Agency of Canada)

Pandemic / Health Information:

www.who.int (World Health Organization)
www.health.alberta.ca (Government of Alberta Health & Wellness)
www.albertahealthservices.ca (Alberta Health Services)
www.hre.gov.ab.ca (Government of Alberta Employment & Immigration)
1-866-408-5465 (Health Link Alberta)