



**The El Paso County Department  
of Health and Environment  
in Partnership with the  
Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce  
Health Care Council**



***An Important Message***  
**H1N1 Flu—Safety Is Up to You**  
**Business Planning and Preparation**

Recent news of the H1N1 Flu (also known as swine flu) illustrates how critical it is for business owners and operators to play a strong role in reducing the spread of illness. As flu season approaches, awareness and preparation for H1N1 are strongly encouraged. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that employers play a key role in protecting their employees, customers and the community.

Here are the basics to consider:

- √ **Communicate often with employees**
  - Share your preparation efforts and tell them how they can help.
  - Create and publish a company policy regarding sick leave. Prepare to assist employees who do not have sick leave.
  - Post tips about handwashing and cough/sneeze etiquette prominently for employees and customers. Find posters, brochures and other materials at the Health Department's Web site.
  - Reduce handshaking—that is a common way germs spread.
  - Anticipate fear, rumors and misinformation and be prepared to respond.
  
- √ **Prepare your employees**
  - Establish a communication plan; include how key staff will be notified of emergencies and how decisions will be made if public health officials recommend that people avoid gathering in group settings.
  - Encourage employees to prepare food, medicine and supplies in case they need to stay home for several days.
  - Cross-train employees to cover the most essential functions for your business.
  - Encourage employees to get seasonal flu shots—which are available now. When H1N1 vaccine becomes available, encourage employees to get vaccinated, especially if they fall into target groups recommended by public health officials.
  
- √ **Take action to prevent illness**
  - Send sick employees home and encourage them to stay home until 24 hours after fever is gone without fever-reducing medicine.
  - Pay attention—the symptoms of H1N1 flu virus include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.
  - Consider establishing procedures for telecommuting and flexible schedules to limit personal contact.
  
- √ **Coordinate with emergency management, public health experts and community leaders**
  - Visit the Health Department's Web site often and watch for updates and guidance.
  - Share your best practices and lessons learned with other businesses and groups.

**For more information and resources: [www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org)**

El Paso County Department of Health and Environment  
301 S. UNION BLVD. • COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80910-3123  
(719) 578-3199 • FAX (719) 575-8664