



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION DES HÔTELS DU CANADA

H1N1 Influenza Management in Hotels

October, 2009

Disclaimer

This plan is designed to assist you with your management of any potential H1N1 influenza outbreak in your lodging business among employees and guests.

This document is a generalized template for informational purposes only and can not be used as-is for any particular hotel. Any final plan must take into account the nature and configuration of the property, the nature and configuration of the local outbreak and available resources, municipal and provincial laws, personnel availability, food and water sources and many other specific considerations. The Hotel Association of Canada makes no warranty whatsoever concerning the accuracy or completeness of this information.

Hotel Areas for Decontamination

These steps should be in any hotelier's plan of attack on influenza viruses.

- Follow the instructions provided by your local health authority
- Stock enough cleaning products for the size of your operation
- Provide your employees with the proper personal protection equipment, such as disposable gloves
- Provide hand sanitized products and tissues in the employee and public areas
- Monitor your employee's health, and emphasize cough etiquette

The H1N1 influenza virus can survive 24 to 48 hours on stainless steel and plastic surfaces, 8 to 12 hours on soft surfaces such as cloth, paper and tissues and up to 5 minutes on hands. These areas in a hotel should receive heightened sanitizing attention during this period. There will be other commonly touched surfaces in your hotel requiring attention, so make sure you add them to the list.

Guest Rooms

- Door handles
- Door security latches
- Desks and chair arms
- Dresser and table drawer handles
- Table countertop surfaces
- Telephone keypad
- TV remote control buttons
- Toilet and faucet handles
- Recycling bins
- Lights and temperature control switches
- In-room information directories, such as menus
- Room Keys

Lobby, Public Areas and Restaurants

- Door handles and stair railings
- Push plates on swing doors
- Elevator buttons
- Tables and chairs

- Menus
- Public telephones
- Counter surfaces at reception and concierge areas
- Pens used for signing receipts
- Computer keyboards and mouse
- Ice machines
- Beverages and service items, such as coffee and tea pot handles
- Exercise equipment in fitness rooms

Public Restrooms

- Door handles and stair railings
- Handles on door stalls
- Toilet and faucet handles
- Soap dispenser handles
- Counter surfaces
- Towel dispensing handles

Back of House Property

- Door handles and stair railings
- Push plates on swing doors
- Telephone and computer keyboards
- Computer mouse
- Food serving scoops and spoons
- Beverage service handles
- Refrigerator handles
- Toilet and faucet handles
- Soap dispenser handles
- Towel Dispensing handles
- Cleaning equipment and tool handles
- Bucket and garbage can handles

Sample Guest Letter

This is a sample letter that hotels can use to communicate with guests in the event of an H1N1 outbreak in their local areas. This letter should be modified based on the events occurring in a specific area during the time of the outbreak.

Dear Valued Guest,

Welcome to *(Hotel Name)*. It is a pleasure to have you stay with us.

Guest safety is our top priority at *(Hotel Name)*. Because of the recent media reports concerning the local outbreak of H1N1 influenza, our hotel has immediately implemented a number of increased health and safety measures.

We strive to maintain high standards of food and environmental hygiene at our hotel. In addition to the high cleanliness standards already in place to combat the spread of H1N1 flu, we have taken additional precautionary measures:

(Include all those that apply)

- Increased hand washing and sanitation efforts by staff members
- Providing more soap and hand-cleanser products for use by guests and employees
- Frequent sanitizing of publicly used surfaces in the hotel, such as countertops and doorknobs
- Hotel employees exhibiting flu symptoms are sent home for rest and recovery
- Increased contact with local health authorities and are following their instructions about public health areas and how to contain infections

We are committed to complying with the stringent health standards recommended by local health authorities during this flu pandemic.

Should you have any questions or require more information during your stay with us, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Thank you for choosing to stay with us.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)
General Manager

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Name

Phone Number or Email Address

INFLUENZA IN *(Hotel Name)*

(Date) – The *(Hotel Name)* in *(City, Province)* has taken a number of stringent precautionary measures to address H1N1 influenza concerns. As always, our top priority at *(hotel name)* is to help ensure the health, safety and well-being of our hotel guests and employees. We strive to maintain the highest standards of sanitation and food hygiene at our property.

In addition to these standards, we have taken additional precautions to reduce the concerns that any of our guests may have regarding the presence of H1N1 influenza virus in *(Hotel Name)*.

The precautions that have been taken at *(Hotel Name)* include:

- Increased hand washing and sanitation efforts by staff members
- Providing more soap and hand-cleanser products for use by guests and employees
- Frequent sanitizing of publicly used surfaces in the hotel, such as countertops and doorknobs
- Rooms are thoroughly sanitized by staff after each guest has checked out
- Hotel employees exhibiting flu symptoms are sent home for rest and recovery
- Increased contact with local health authorities and are following their instructions about public health areas and how to contain infections

(Additional information about local H1N1 or hotel conditions)

In the meantime, the staff at *(Hotel Name)* are monitoring the situation closely for any further developments. If there are any additional queries, please contact *(name)* at *(phone number of email address)*.

Sample Employee Communication

H1N1 Influenza

As you may have heard from news reports H1N1 influenza has been reported in our area. Based on the information we have gathered from local health authorities, this is no cause for undue concern at this time. The public health and medical authorities have been working with hospitals to protect the public from illness.

The local public health authorities are also relying upon you to help protect the traveling public. The most important tool you have to protect your guests is information. It is important to become familiar with the facts about H1N1 influenza and what are its symptoms. Not all flu-like ailments are H1N1 flu, since the symptoms resemble the same as ordinary seasonal flu.

Those suffering from H1N1 influenza usually have the same symptoms as ordinary seasonal flu, such as fever, cough, muscle ache, runny nose, fatigue and sore throat. At an early stage, it is difficult to tell which infection is responsible for an afflicted person's symptoms.

They include:

- Fever, usually higher than 37.8° C or 100° F
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Body and muscle aches
- Dry cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Tiredness, fatigue and weakness

A significant number of people who have been infected with H1N1 influenza virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

Despite H1N1 flu's other name— swine flu- there is no evidence that it can be spread through the eating of processed pork and pork products.

How to minimize your chances for contracting the disease

While there is no guarantee that doing the following will prevent you from getting H1N1 flu, these simple precautions will significantly reduce your chances of catching it.

- Use good hygiene to minimize the spread of the flu. Simple hand washing will go a long way by removing the virus from your own personal environment.
- Avoid direct contact and or close contact with ill persons.
- Proper disposal of used tissues or other articles that have come in contact with your nose, throat, mouth or eyes. These are the areas that allow the flu into your body.
- Room attendants should continue to use gloves to change used guest towels and empty garbage cans.
- Used towels and bed linens should be removed and washed each day.
- Avoid rooms where you hear sneezing or coughing and allow an hour after the guest leaves before entering the room.

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If an issue or concern should arise at our hotel, employees should follow these steps to help protect the well-being of the affected guest, employees, patron of the hotel and themselves.

- Notify your supervisor or the general manager of any concern.
- The general manager or his/her designate will be the point person and the only spokesperson to respond to media enquiries about H1N1 flu and the hotel's precautions against its spread.
- Follow the procedures given to you from your supervisor or management.
- Do not release the details of any potentially affected guest or employee.
- Be prepared to support the guest or employee with family calls and information. If the situation were reversed, you would want to be helped when you are ill.
- Follow all company procedures for reporting possible incidents about infected guests or employees.

Thank you for your kind cooperation with these procedures and request.

(Name of General Manager)

Sample Employee Communication if Other Employees / Guests Have Contracted H1N1 Influenza

H1N1 Influenza

As you may have heard from news reports H1N1 influenza has been reported in our area. Based on the information we have gathered from local health authorities, this is no cause for undue concern at this time. The public health and medical authorities have been working with hospitals to protect the public from illness.

In our own hotel there has been a reported case of H1N1 flu. We are reporting this to our employees so that they may monitor themselves for flu symptoms and take appropriate precautions.

The most important tool you have to protect yourself, your family, the other hotel employees and our guests is information. It is important to become familiar with the facts about H1N1 influenza and what are its symptoms. Not all flu-like ailments are H1N1 flu, since the symptoms resemble the same as ordinary seasonal flu.

Those suffering from H1N1 influenza usually have the same symptoms as ordinary seasonal flu, such as fever, cough, muscle ache, runny nose, fatigue and sore throat. At an early stage, it is difficult to tell which infection is responsible for an afflicted person's symptoms.

They include:

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- Sore throat
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How to minimize you chances for contracting the disease

While there is no guarantee that doing the following will prevent you from getting H1N1 flu, these simple precautions will significantly reduce your chances of catching it.

- Use good hygiene to minimize the spread of the flu. Simple hand washing will go a long way by removing the virus from your own personal environment.
- Avoid direct contact and or close contact with ill persons.
- Proper disposal of used tissues or other articles that have come in contact with your nose, throat, mouth or eyes. These are the areas that allow the flu into your body.
- Room attendants should continue to use gloves to change used guest towels and empty garbage cans.
- Room attendants should continue to sanitize door knobs, TV remote controls, telephone keypads, sink basin knobs, light switches and countertops with the proper disinfectant.

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- Avoid rooms where you hear sneezing or coughing and allow an hour after the guest leaves before entering the room.
- Do not release the details of any potentially affected guest or employee.
- Be prepared to support the guest or employee with family calls and information. If the situation were reversed, you would want to be helped when you are ill.
- Follow all company procedures for reporting possible incidents about infected guests or employees.

Thank you for your kind cooperation with these procedures and request.

(Name of General Manager)

Sources

Health Canada

Public Health Agency of Canada

Canadian International Center for Infectious Diseases

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

American Hotel and Lodging Association

World Health Organization