



UFCW News Service

UFCW Occupational Safety and Health Office Recommendations to Local Unions with retail members, re: 2009 H1N1 flu

The CDC has developed Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season. The new guidance currently applies to any flu virus circulating during the 2009-2010 flu season, not only 2009 H1N1 flu virus.

The CDC states: It will be very hard to tell if someone who is sick has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu.

The guidance recommends that employees with flu-like illness stay home at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees F) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating).

Workers in retail food stores have a higher than normal exposure to the public, which may put them at higher risk of contracting the flu during the 2009-2010 flu season. In line with CDCs guidance, the UFCW agrees that employers should be taking steps now to:

- "Protect employees health and safety
- Limit the negative impact to the community, economy and society, and
- Minimize disruption to business activities."

The UFCW OSH Office is making the following recommendations for employers in the retail food industry to take, at a minimum, the following steps:

1. Refer to CDC Guidelines and CDCs Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season. These are available on the CDC Web site: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance and www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.
2. Make the flu vaccine available at no cost to employees - and encourage employees to get vaccinated for seasonal flu. With pharmacies located in supermarkets, this can be done with minimal disruption during work hours.
3. Create policies for flexible sick leave, which provides paid time for sick employees to stay home. CDC guidance advises employers to allow employees who get sick at work with the flu to go home as soon as possible, and to advise all employees to stay home if they are sick, until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever.
4. Provide resources to employees so they can be protected from infection: Provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, alcohol-based hand cleaner at the work station, time to use the restroom to wash hands frequently.
5. Provide cleaning agents to cashiers to clean surfaces which are more likely to have frequent hand contact with the public.

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