

Messages for Tourism Industry Regarding H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)

As at 29 May 2009

Key Messages

The Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET) has a National Tourism Incident Response Plan which sets out a process for delivering a coherent national response aimed at minimising the impact of incidents on the Australian tourism industry.

The tourism industry can get more information from the Department of Health and Ageing website www.healthemergency.gov.au or by phoning the **Hotline on 180 2007**.

Health Advice for Visitors

Tourists who arrive in Australia and are regarded as a "suspected" case (fever with runny nose, stuffy nose, sore throat or cough and a history of travel to Mexico, USA or Canada) will be referred to a Public Health Unit, who will assist with advice, "flu kits" (including masks and antiseptic hand rub) as well as interpreting laboratory results. They will also be advised to do the following:

- seek medical advice regarding the need for treatment or further testing to identify if they have contracted human-swine influenza
- remain in their accommodation, avoiding contact with other people where possible for either 7 days or until human-swine influenza has been excluded
- if they have to be with other people, try to stay at least 1 metre away from others, and wear a surgical mask to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others
- maintain good hand hygiene (frequent washing and drying of hands) and appropriate cough etiquette (cover a cough or sneeze, dispose of tissues appropriately, avoid touching eyes or face)

Actions for Small Business

According to the Australian Government's Pandemic Planning Checklist for Small Business, the actions that businesses should be taking now are:

- Consider limiting business travel to areas where cases of human infection have occurred if possible. Use alternative methods of contact with these areas where practicable (phone, video conferencing, online forums, etc). If not possible, ensure staff travelling to those areas are aware of practical measures to reduce the risk of their getting ill and that they know what to do if they do become ill away from home.
- Implement remote work arrangements, in areas where there have been cases of human infection, if viable for your business.
- Alert staff to the possibility of a pandemic and the actions they should take to reduce the risk of infection.
- In affected areas, consider isolating the air circulation heating/cooling system into discrete areas to avoid contamination and introduce additional cleaning and disinfecting (e.g. handrails, door handles, lift controls, telephones, and rubbish bins).

The full checklist is available at

http://www.innovation.gov.au/Pandemic_Business_Continuity/Documents/Pandemic_PlanningChecklistForSmallBusiness20060627141916.pdf.

Additional Resources

- A pre-existing Business Continuity Guide is available to help Australian businesses take appropriate actions to prepare themselves as best they can.
- A pandemic planning checklist for small businesses and a set of ten steps businesses can take to be better prepared for a pandemic is also available.
- These resources are available at www.innovation.gov.au and click on 'a range of resources available for business'.
- The *Prepared and Protected DVD – Special Edition for Australia's Accommodation Sector* includes infection control guidelines for Front of House and Room Cleaning and is available for download at http://www.ret.gov.au/tourism/policy/tourism_business_continuity/prepared_and_protected_dvd/Pages/PreparedandProtectedDVD.aspx
- *Pandemic Planning in the Workplace* assists employers and employees to consider some of the possible impacts of a human influenza pandemic on their workplace and prepare in advance.
http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/pandemic/docs/Pandemic_Planning_in_the_Workplace.pdf