8 Do’s and Don’ts



The flu season is shaping up to be a bad one. It started peaking early. And, according to data collected by Google, flu cases in Canada this year are expected to outstrip last year’s rates by as much as 250%. Here are 8 do’s and don’ts to help you deal with flu issues.

1. Don’t Ignore Flu Risks

You have a legal duty under OHS, negligence, and other laws to protect workers and even visitors from getting the flu at your workplace.

2. Create an Exposure Control Plan

One of the best ways to keep workers from getting the flu is through an exposure control plan. (Use this Checklist to organize your pandemic planning.)

3. Don’t Discipline Employees for Refusing to Get a Flu Shot

Unless you work for a hospital, nursing home or other healthcare facility, refusing a flu shot is generally may not be valid grounds to discipline employees.

4. Know the Rules about Asking Employees Who Call in Sick If They Have the Flu

Normally, you can’t ask employees who call in sick if they have the flu. But if there’s an influenza pandemic and the government declares a public emergency, you may be allowed—and even required—to do so.

5. Don’t Discipline Employees Who Refuse Work Out of Flu Fears Before Investigating

Whether employees who fear flu may refuse work depends on several factors that you need to consider on a case-by-case basis. So tell your supervisors not to make snap judgments and that each refusal must be investigated before discipline is meted out.

6. Create a Pandemic Flu Policy

Make sure that your company’s business continuity plans includes steps to take in the event of an influenza pandemic. See the Pandemic Flu Policy in TOOLS.

7. Don’t Violate Employee’s Privacy Rights

Although you’ll need to collect and disclose personal health information as part of your flu response program, make sure your health measures recognize and respect

employees’ privacy rights.

8. Understand Workers’ Comp Coverage of Flu

Recognize that employees may have a hard time getting workers’ comp coverage they come down with the flu at work and know the coverage rules in your province to manage the claim properly.

Final Pointers

If you haven’t already taken steps to address flu season in your workplace, there are still things you can do now, such as:

- Encourage sick employees to stay home so they don’t infect their coworkers.
- Remind employees who are symptomatic of proper cough etiquette.
- Urge all employees to get a flu shot—and to make it easy, hold a flu clinic in the workplace.
- Hang this infographic in your workplace to educate employees on the flu.