



MINISTRY OF
MANPOWER

ntuc
National Trades Union Congress

SNEF

TRIPARTITE ADVISORY ON WORKPLACE MEASURES TO TACKLE MEXICAN SWINE INFLUENZA

Background

The World Health Organisation has raised the pandemic alert phase for the outbreak of Mexican swine flu from Phase 4 to Phase 5, signaling that a pandemic is imminent. Even though there are no human cases of Mexican swine flu in Singapore as of 30 April 09, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has upgraded Singapore's alert level from Yellow to Orange¹. This indicates that there is a real possibility that such cases may surface in Singapore and we must be prepared on all fronts to delay their spread to Singapore for as long as possible.

Tripartite Advisory on Workplace Measures

2 In consultation with the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) recommends the following to help employers make appropriate preparations for a possible swine flu outbreak, at the alert level of Orange:

Information Dissemination

3 Employers should closely monitor Mexican swine flu-related developments, and follow the travel and health advisories at the MOH website (). The information should then be communicated regularly to employees.

4 Employers are advised to brief employees on business continuity plans. Plans for continuity in key positions should also be in place. In addition, the plans should also cover actions relating to higher alert levels (i.e. Red and Black).

Infection Control Measures

5 Employers are strongly encouraged to implement infection control measures at the workplace, including:

- a. Maintaining environmental cleanliness to minimize transmission of the swine flu virus, including frequent disinfection of common areas.

¹ Please see Ministry of Health's colour alerts under the Disease Outbreak Response System, at <http://www.crisis.gov.sg/FLU/Alert+System.htm>

- b. Advising employees to maintain high standards of personal hygiene, such as washing hands frequently with soap and water, especially after contact with respiratory secretions (e.g. after sneezing and coughing). Those who have flu-like symptoms should seek medical help promptly, and inform the doctors of their travel histories.
- c. Conducting temperature checks routinely. Employees with a higher-than-normal temperature should be advised to seek treatment immediately. Information of all visitors should also be recorded, including the date and time of visit, personal particulars and contact number of visitors. This will facilitate contact tracing should the need arise.
- d. Avoiding or postponing non-essential travel to Mexico. In the event that travel to Mexico is unavoidable, employees should take precautionary measures, such as avoiding crowded areas and maintaining high standards of personal hygiene at all times. Employers should note that persons with travel history to Mexico over the past seven days will be quarantined for seven days on their return to Singapore and undergo phone surveillance for symptoms for Mexican swine flu. Employees who are returning from other affected areas (i.e. states of New York, California, Kansas and Texas in the United States and the state of Nova Scotia in Canada) should be advised to stay at home for seven days upon return and check themselves for symptoms for Mexican swine flu. They should practice social distancing and refrain from joining mass gatherings, e.g. going to the cinemas, shopping malls, or supermarkets etc. Employees who develop respiratory illness with fever (Temperature > 38°C) within seven days after their return should put on a surgical mask and call 993 for an ambulance. They should also disclose their travel histories to their doctors.

Other Resources

6 As the situation is fast evolving, please refer to the latest updates, announcements and advisories given by MOH at <http://www.moh.gov.sg>. Employers may also refer to MOH's *Guide on Infection Control Measures for Workplaces* (<http://www.crisis.gov.sg/FLU/Precautions/Workplace/>)

7 For further clarification or advice, please contact:

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- b. Singapore National Employers Federation
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