
Interim Guidance for Law Enforcement Personnel for Protection from 2009 H1N1 Influenza Infection

This document provides interim guidance for law enforcement and security personnel. Component agencies are free to supplement this basic guidance based upon the specific needs of their operating environment. The information contained in this document is intended to complement existing guidance on H1N1 influenza posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website www.cdc.gov

Background

The United States Government has declared a public health emergency in the United States. As a component of the Nation's critical infrastructure, law enforcement personnel play a vital role in responding to requests for assistance and for maintaining public safety. Law enforcement personnel have frequent contact with the public, some of whom may be ill with 2009-H1N1 Influenza, in their role maintaining civil order.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu.

Infectious Period

Persons with H1N1 influenza virus infection should be considered potentially infectious from one day before illness onset to seven days following illness onset. Persons who continue to be ill longer than seven days after illness onset should be considered potentially contagious until symptoms have resolved. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Non-hospitalized ill persons who are a confirmed or suspected case of H1N1 influenza virus infection are recommended to stay at home (voluntary isolation) for at least the first seven days after checking with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema. CDC guidance on care of patients at home can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm)

Prevention of Infection

In order to prevent yourself from getting the flu, the most important act is to wash your hands. Other important actions include:

- Try to stay in good general health.
- Get plenty of sleep and be physically active.
- Manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
- Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus.
- Avoid unnecessary close contact with people who are sick.

Additional measures that can limit transmission of a new influenza strain include voluntary home quarantine of members of households with confirmed or probable H1N1 influenza cases, reduction of unnecessary social contacts, and avoidance whenever possible of crowded settings.

When it is necessary to enter a crowded setting or to have close contact with persons who might be ill, the time spent in that setting should be as short as possible. If used correctly, facemasks and respirators may help reduce the risk of getting influenza, but they should be used along with other preventive measures, such as avoiding close contact and maintaining good hand hygiene. A respirator that fits snugly on your face can filter out small particles that can be inhaled around the edges of a facemask, but compared with a facemask it is harder to breathe through a respirator for long periods of time. Respiratory protection is effective only if the correct respirator is used, it is available when needed, it is worn properly, and it has been stored and kept in working order in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. For more information on facemasks and respirators, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/masks.htm>

Recommendations for Law Enforcement and First Responders

Interim recommendations:

If there HAS NOT been H1N1 influenza reported in the geographic area (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>), law enforcement personnel should approach all persons as follows:

- Where possible, law enforcement personnel should stay more than 6 feet away from persons with flu-like symptoms and exercise appropriate routine respiratory secretion precautions in accordance with standing guidance.

If there is confirmed H1N1 influenza in the geographic area (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>):

- Address scene safety:
 - If there are reports of persons exhibiting flu-like symptoms on scene, law enforcement personnel should don personal protective equipment for suspected cases of H1N1 influenza prior to entering scene.
 - If there are no reports that there are individuals with H1N1 symptoms on the scene, and law enforcement personnel arriving at the scene determine that persons are exhibiting symptoms, law enforcement personnel should stay more than 6 feet away from those persons with symptoms, if possible, and exercise appropriate routine respiratory secretion precautions while maintaining close interaction with people suspected of having the flu.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

Interim recommendations:

- When in close sustained contact with a suspected cases of H1N1 influenza as defined above, the following PPE should be worn:
 - Fit-tested disposable N95 respirator and disposable non-sterile gloves.
- When approaching a person that is not a suspected case of H1N1 influenza but who has symptoms of a flu like illness, the following precautions should be taken:
 - If available, place a standard surgical mask on the person, if tolerated. If not tolerated, law enforcement may wear a mask.
 - Use good respiratory hygiene – use non-sterile gloves for contact with patient, patient secretions, or surfaces that may have been contaminated. Follow hand hygiene including hand washing or cleansing with alcohol-based hand disinfectant after contact.
 - Be aware of possible cross contamination of other surfaces (i.e. vehicle steering wheels, door handles) that may have been touched by persons wearing gloves that may be contaminated.
 - Prisoner transport vehicles should be routinely cleaned with soap or detergent and water to remove soil and organic matter, followed by the proper use of disinfectants. Influenza viruses are susceptible to inactivation by a number of chemical disinfectants readily available from consumer and commercial sources (for more general information about disinfection of environmental surfaces, see the CDC/ Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) “Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities,” available at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_envirinfection.html)