

# Letter to Branches

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General Secretary: Billy Hayes ([www.billyhayes.co.uk](http://www.billyhayes.co.uk))

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**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues

## **HSE Swine flu - General advice for employers:**

HSE have added to the advice being issued by government agencies and it's reproduced below:

Employers and employees should always practice good personal hygiene measures – use a disposable tissue to control coughs/sneezes, dispose of it appropriately and wash your hands before eating, drinking etc. In addition at the current time Employers should:

- \* Advise your staff to stay at home if they are sick with flu-like symptoms and have good reason to believe, based on HPA guidance, that they may have been exposed to the swine flu virus
  
- \* Send home any employees who are displaying flu-like signs/symptoms in the situation described above

For further information about swine flu please visit the [Health Protection Agency \(HPA\) website](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb): <http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb>

## **Use of face masks**

The number of people in public places who are displaying symptoms is likely to be limited. **Therefore it should not be necessary for workers to wear facemasks** routinely when in contact with the general public.

For certain occupations and activities where there is an increased likelihood of exposure (e.g. health and social care workers), HSE's guidance is that fluid-repellent surgical face masks offer a barrier to minimise contact with the mouth and nose but do not offer protection against aerosols.

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For protection against aerosols a FFP3 mask should be used. A filtering facepiece (FFP3) device is a mask which is certified to the PPE Directive. It provides a high level of filtering capability and face fit.

### **Assessing the types of control measures needed within the workplace**

DH, working with HSE and HPA, has produced guidance for businesses in the eventuality of a flu pandemic. This is available at Department of Health website: Pandemic flu guidance for businesses and contains advice on facemasks and good hygiene, as well as a risk assessment matrix and checklists:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_097137](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_097137)

### **Further information**

The Department of Health and Health Protection Agency (HPA) are the lead agencies on swine flu:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_097137](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_097137)

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&itemId=1083024724>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/>

Information on the symptoms and treatment of swine flu across the

UK: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/groups/dg> <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&itemId=1083024727> in England are:

- NHS for all public-facing health information:<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>
- DirectGov for all public-facing cross-governmental information: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>
- Business Link for information for businesses:  
[http://direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG\\_177834](http://direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG_177834)
- Department of Health for information for health and care professionals:  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

Employers requiring specific information on how to deal with swine flu can see the following links for advice:

- NHS - General guidance and advice to businesses:  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_097137](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_097137)
- NHS - Advice for pregnant workers:  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pandemic-flu/Pages/Adviceforpregnantwomen.aspx>

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- Department of Health - Advice from the Chief Medical Officer:  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/Swineflu/DH\\_103068](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/Swineflu/DH_103068)
- Business Link - Information to circulate to employees, including information on preventing transmission:  
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&itemId=1083024724>
- Business Link - Information on crisis management, business continuity planning, handling the risks of disease and infection and risk assessments:  
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&itemId>
- Directgov - Information on sick leave provision:  
[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG\\_177831](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG_177831)
- Directgov - Detailed planning assumptions forecast by the Business Advisory Network for Flu (BANF) and advice:  
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=ONEOFFPAGE&itemId=1083024727>
- Directgov - Information on international business travellers:  
[http://direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG\\_177834](http://direct.gov.uk/en/Swineflu/DG_177834)

Yours Sincerely

**Dave Joyce**

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

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