

Letter to Branches

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General Secretary: Billy Hayes (www.billyhayes.co.uk)

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TO BRANCHES WITH MEMBERS IN BT

Dear Colleague,

BT's RESPONSE TO SWINE FLU

The attached communication was sent to all BT employees yesterday, and is being sent to you for information purposes.

The CWU Health & Safety Department will be sending out further information shortly on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Kerr

Deputy General Secretary (T&FS)

Att.

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION
URGENT INFORMATION FOR 1 MEMBERS

BT's response to swine flu

Last weekend, the world became aware of swine flu (the H1N1 virus) with cases confirmed in Mexico, USA, Canada, Spain, Israel and the UK with further suspected cases in New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Columbia and South Korea. This is a rapidly developing situation and there is significant cooperation between Government and health agencies around the world to take the most appropriate action to prevent the spread of infection.

1. Medical advice

While no vaccine has yet been developed for this new virus, infected people are responding well to antiviral medication. The most effective way to prevent the spread of a virus is to practise good personal hygiene. Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze, disposing of the tissue as soon as possible, and cleaning your hands as soon as you can are important actions that can help prevent the spread of germs.

We all have an important role in preventing ourselves, our families and others from spreading germs. This becomes vital in an epidemic or pandemic and good personal hygiene is the key. Washing your hands regularly and effectively makes a huge difference in protecting you and those around you – it can literally save lives!

A useful guide to help to prevent the spread of flu at work, 'Coughs and sneezes spread diseases' is available at: http://homepage.intra.bt.com/home/flu_final.pdf

2. Travel

No-one should travel to Mexico on business until further notice. All travel should be booked through AMEX which will know if, and when, travel bans are imposed on other countries.

If you have returned from a trip to an area with human to human spread (currently only Mexico), return to work as normal unless you – or a member of your travel party – have developed flu-like symptoms. The symptoms to look out for within a week of return would be fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Anyone with these symptoms should seek urgent medical advice and stay away from work until cleared by your doctor. Please remember to let your line manager know what is happening.

3. Next steps

A central team has been established to plan the action we need to take in the event of a global human influenza pandemic to both safeguard the welfare of our people and to ensure business continuity for the company and our customers.

BT's action will be in line with the advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO) which has defined a six-phase international alert status which has moved from stage three to stage four. Stage four means the virus is showing a sustained ability to pass from human to human, and is able to cause community-level outbreaks. This is an important step towards declaring a full pandemic (where a virus spreads rapidly from person to person and across international boundaries).

We will keep you informed by email as the situation develops, but please also check BT Today which will cover the latest news on a daily basis.

Paul Litchfield
BT's Chief Medical Officer
28 April 2009

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Additional Information

- For more information about swine flu, please see:
<http://homepage.intra.bt.com/home/swineflu>
- The 'International SOS' site is a trusted source of information and is monitoring the emerging situation round the clock, providing regular updates. These updates cover latest news, travel recommendations, updates from affected parts of the world. <http://urgent.internationalsos.com/default.aspx>
- AMEX travel service at:
<http://supplychain2.intra.bt.com/pandsc/travel/amex/index.shtml>

Issued by BT Group Communications to all BT people

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