



Flu Season is Here – Is Your Office Ready?

The H1N1 virus is back, and its return raises both practical and legal issues for employers. Are you ready to advise your clients? *Is your office prepared?*

Amy Angel of Barran Liebman LLP addresses the first question in her informative article, [Legal Considerations of a Pandemic Flu](#). She touches on actions employers must or should take under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Family Medical Leave Acts, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Anti-Discrimination Statutes.

In addition to advising your clients, take the time to educate all staff on appropriate safety measures. The Professional Liability Fund is asking employees to review and follow the recommendations below. (The most important of which is to STAY HOME IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS.)

- Employees are asked to stay home if experiencing flu like symptoms, or when it is known or suspected they have been exposed to the H1N1 virus. See the brochure from the *Center for Disease Control and Prevention* for information about the [2009 H1N1 flu](#).
- Employees are asked to stay home with symptoms of other known viruses or contagious illnesses. Exposing other employees to any other illnesses can weaken employees' physical strength to fight off H1N1. Do not return to work until 24 hours after your fever has gone away.
- Call your supervisor if you know or think that you have the flu. You should call your doctor if you have the symptoms of the flu.
- During the flu season, employees are asked to help in preventing the spread of illness in the office by utilizing the following:
 - Hand Sanitizer, antibacterial hand soap in restrooms, tissues at your desk, Clorox sanitizing wipes for cleaning shared work areas, phones, and keyboards. (Please do not spray disinfectants on your computer keyboard or your phone.)
 - **Cover your mouth and nose** with tissue when coughing, sneezing.

- **Wash hands** before and after eating, use warm water and soap, washing for at least 20 seconds. **Keep hands away from your face.**
- Be thoughtful of employees that are prone to infection because of compromised immune systems.
- If you become ill at work, please tell your supervisor and go home.

Encourage employees to get flu shots to stop the spread of the regular influenza virus. Provide insurance coverage information, consider sponsoring a flu shot clinic, or offer to reimburse employees in whole or in part for the cost of a [flu shot](#). Small efforts go a long way toward prevention of illness and time missed from work.

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