

Basic Office and Work Area Cleaning Tips

Both H1N1 flu (swine flu) and seasonal influenza are spread when people are in close contact. Since employees often spend up to eight hours a day in an office, breathing the same air and coming into contact with the same surfaces, the office can be a breeding ground for viruses and bacterial infections to spread. Paying close attention to personal and workplace hygiene, employers can minimize the risk of spreading flu viruses in the workplace. Good personal hygiene should be the first step in minimizing the spread of infections. Employees should:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; germs spread that way.
- Avoid close contact with persons who are ill (i.e., being within about six feet).
- Stay home if you get sick and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

The workplace should be thoroughly cleaned to ensure infections do not spread to other employees. Eighty percent of all common illnesses are spread by hand to mouth.

Work Area and Office Disinfection Tips:

During a flu outbreak, disinfecting is critical! Give special attention to highly touched environmental surfaces in your work area and office such as the:

- Desk
- Computer keyboard (disinfecting the computer keyboard is effective and should typically be done daily)
- Computer mouse
- Phones
- Printers
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Anywhere you rest your hands

Other work areas that should be disinfected include:

- Restroom sink fixtures and countertops
- Light fixtures
- Door panels
- Restroom dispensers
- Phones
- Elevator buttons
- Number pads
- Escalator and other building handrails
- All gym equipment that is shared
- Countertops of public offices

- Microwave ovens

In general, it's a good idea to:

- Use alcohol-based wipes, over-the-counter disinfectant towels (e.g., germicidal wet wipes, Clorox wipes), or germicidal cleaner, such as a Clorox solution (8 ounces Clorox to 1 gallon of water) to disinfect surfaces where flu viruses are suspected or confirmed. For non-bleachable surfaces, a peroxide solution, such as MIKRO BAC III may be used.
- First clean visible dirt from surfaces with a detergent solution, as dirt inactivates chlorine in germicidal cleaners, a key part of the disinfection process.
- Use a germicidal cleaner (see above) to disinfect all surfaces where H1N1 flu viruses are suspected or confirmed. For non-bleachable surfaces, use a peroxide solution (see above).
- Wear disposable gloves when disinfecting tile, faucets and toilet bowls. Use separate rags or paper towels for the toilet.
- Discard disposable gloves after each room has been cleaned and wash hands before proceeding to the next area. Use protective equipment (e.g., wear safety glasses and gloves) and ensure adequate ventilation.
- Soiled rags should be laundered or disposed of appropriately. Never use sponges for sanitizing or disinfecting, as they are porous. Paper towels should be immediately discarded.

Note: Dry vacuuming is not recommended for carpets; it could propel microbes back into the air.