

A Pandemic Checklist for Laboratories

The following checklist may assist laboratories in determining their 'readiness status' should the influenza pandemic escalate this fall. Where the item is not checked off as completed or 'in place,' ensure there is a note or plan related to the item.

	Notes/Plan
Does the organization have a pandemic/business continuity plan?	
Are employees aware of the content of the plan?	
Have all jobs/tasks been reviewed to determine hazards?	
Are aerosol-generating procedures identified and appropriate controls determined?	
Is the laboratory prepared to receive and process diagnostic samples to rule out the H1N1 virus at a minimum of Containment Level 2 Biosafety Precautions?	
Is the laboratory prepared to manipulate cultured H1N1 (if required) in a Containment Level 2 facility with additional precautions (as defined by the Public Health Agency of Canada - http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ols-bsl/banhsl-abnhgp-eng.php)?	
Is there an immunization program that employees are encouraged to participate in?	
Are closed systems used in the laboratory whenever possible?	
Are biological safety cabinets available and properly maintained?	
Is unauthorized access to the laboratories prohibited?	
Are phlebotomists trained in the infection control procedures in place in the organization for working with patients who may be infected?	
Are staff aware of all control measures to be used in the laboratory?	
Are there adequate hand-washing supplies available?	
Are strict cleaning and decontamination procedures in place and enforced?	
Are staff aware of the TDG requirements for packaging and shipping specimens?	
Are adequate sizes and quantities of required PPE available?	
Are staff fit-tested and trained if they may be required to wear respirators?	
Does the organization have procedures in place for employees to report personal illness?	
Is there a policy in place requiring employees who are ill to stay home?	
Is there a policy or procedure that identifies when an employee who was ill may return to work?	

Is there a policy or plan in place to deal with employees who must remain at home to take care of ill family members?	
Is there a medical surveillance system in place for employees during a pandemic?	
Is there a policy or plan in place to identify and protect workers who are more vulnerable to infection?	
Is there a plan regarding the use of antiviral medications in place?	
Is there an HR policy that defines applicability of benefit plans (including leaves) during a pandemic communicated to all staff?	
Has the laboratory identified critical work that must be continued during a pandemic?	
Are employees cross-trained to ensure adequate staffing and capabilities in the event of high levels of absenteeism?	
Does cross-training include safety aspects of each function or procedure?	
Is there a mechanism whereby employees can easily obtain information or organizational communications about the pandemic activities?	
Are there opportunities for work to be scheduled at staggered shifts to reduce personal contact?	
Has the laboratory considered modifying or re-arranging types of testing done in each laboratory or facility with a view to minimizing exposure and providing maximum efficiency for staff?	
Is there a communication plan related to resuming "business as usual" once the pandemic is over?	

Extra rows are provided in the above checklist for each laboratory to include lab-specific planning activities.

H1N1 Updates

Remember to keep checking the CSMLS website
www.csmls.org
 for the latest information on H1N1 influenza.

