



**Choose Wisely.....
Proven Good, Green and Clean!**

SWINE FLU – FACILITY DEFENSE PROCEDURES

Swine Flu H1N1 could end up being the dreaded pandemic that has been predicted to be well overdue. At last count, over 81 people have been documented as having Swine Flu (40 in the US and 6 or so in Canada). Over 140 people are suspected to have died from Swine Flu in Mexico alone, although this figure is not documented.

Swine Flu causes flu-like symptoms and can lead to pneumonia-like conditions just before death.

Although these numbers are frightening, the fear is that it may be the beginning of a world-wide pandemic, the likes of which we haven't seen since the "Hong Kong Flu" in 1968 that killed 1 million people, or worse, the "Spanish Flu" that killed 50-100 million people in 1918, infecting 40% of the world's population.

WHAT DO WE DO?

The ISSA recently sent out an extremely informative press release that was very detailed in covering the Swine Flu, as well as listing several excellent website links, including a link to the CDC. While all of this information is useful, the underlying message prescribes diligence towards personal hygiene, hand washing, sneezing etiquette, limiting exposure, etc.

What appear to be lacking in all of the media reports are specific instructions regarding environmental sanitation procedures. For this discussion, we must understand that there is no single procedure that should be used in all situations, nor is there a miracle disinfectant that takes care of everything, and every situation. To properly deal with environmental disinfection, we must first identify the level of threat we are dealing with in our facility. For this purpose, we use the DEFCON (Sanitary Defense Condition) threat level scale.

For **DEFCON 1** (no threat to our facility), we are safe to continue cleaning and disinfecting floors, touch points and others surfaces with neutral disinfectant cleaners that use a lean dilution like a 1:256 (ES 256).

For **DEFCON 2** (threat in the community), we need to temporarily upgrade to a richer disinfectant solution to gain the benefits of greater cleaning efficacy and higher microbial soil load capabilities as well as laboratory-documented killing efficacy. At this stage we should be using a 1:64 product (ES 64). Although this may be enough for some facilities, other facilities may have a higher exposure due to the nature of the facility and its overall traffic. For high exposure facilities, we need to consider implementing a two-step procedure that includes pre-cleaning all surfaces with a good disinfectant cleaner (such as ES 25 or 64), then disinfecting (with ES 64 or 256). Generally, this is accomplished by using the disinfectant cleaner on the floor to minimize surface-to-surface cross contamination that leads to facility-wide outbreaks. Next we clean from the top down, pre-cleaning the surfaces, then hitting it a second time to

guarantee complete disinfection. Lastly, we use our disinfectant solution on the floor again. In this manner, we have truly disinfected pre-cleaned surfaces in the room or the facility.

For **DEFCON 3** (infectious, highly contagious and potentially lethal diseases in the facility), we will need to go to more aggressive disinfectants and procedures. Since Swine Flu (H1N1) is so new, there has been little time and few blood samples for any testing to be completed. As such, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the WHO (World Health Organization) recommend using the fallback protocol of a 1:10 solution of bleach on all surfaces known to have been exposed to the pathogen. A 1:10 bleach solution is always recommended by the CDC when dealing with a new and unknown pathogen. It is assumed to be effective due to its extreme corrosivity. Of course, this has other negative impacts on the surfaces themselves, degrading floor finish, corroding stainless steel, etc., but when dealing with an unknown, there is no choice on the matter.

For most of us right now, we need to adopt a DEFCON 2 mentality, upgrading our disinfectant solutions, even utilizing several different disinfectant solutions based on their specific recommended use and their cost in use. Additionally, we need to consider enhancing some of our procedures...until the threat is gone. Then, and only then, can we safely go back to the cleaning and disinfecting solutions and procedures we had in place prior to this outbreak.

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