



## GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC GATHERING SETTINGS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PANDEMIC H1N1 INFLUENZA (VERSION2)

This guidance document is based on current knowledge and is subject to updates. The document should be read in conjunction with relevant Public Health Agency of Canada information found on [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca) and SK Health documents on <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenza-monitor>.

### **What is a Public Gathering?**

It is a temporary collection of large numbers of people for a short period of time (i.e. sporting event or concert) or longer (i.e. Olympic Games). The gathering can be held at one location or spread over different sites.

### **Should Public Gatherings be cancelled?**

Cancellation of public gatherings due to H1N1 Influenza is not recommended at this time. A decision to cancel, postpone or modify a public gathering would be made by public health officials and event organizers. Factors to consider include how many people locally are ill, severity of illness, type of event and participating population.

### **What can event planners do to prevent the spread of illness at a Public Gathering?**

Be aware of the level of illness in the community. Educate staff and the public on infection prevention and control measures:

Before the event – newspaper, TV, radio, back of ticket, brochures

During the event – posters, greeters, brochures, announcements

#### **Messages to deliver to staff and participants include:**

- Before and during the event, how to recognize influenza like illness (ILI) – acute onset of fever and cough and one or more of: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain, or weakness. Vomiting/diarrhea may be present and fever may not be prominent <http://www.fightflu.ca/sym-eng.html>
- How illness is spread – *directly* from person to person through coughing or sneezing. *Indirect* from touching contaminated surfaces and objects and then touching the eyes/nose/mouth.
- When and how to wash hands (i.e. before/after eating, after sneezing/coughing/recreation/washroom use) <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/iif-vcg/wh-lm-eng.php#b>
- Cough and sneeze etiquette <http://www.fightflu.ca/prot-eng.html>
- Avoid travel if experiencing symptoms of ILI. Stay home until symptom free to prevent spread to others

- Persons who are pregnant and/or have an underlying medical condition i.e. asthma, diabetes, etc. may be at higher risk for complications from influenza. Extra precaution on the part of the individual is necessary to prevent illness. When cases of illness are high in the community, consider avoiding attendance at public gatherings.

**Steps event planners can take to prevent the spread of illness:**

- If possible/practical, provide assessment of people coming in with or who develop symptoms of ILI at the event. Provide a mechanism for isolating ill staff/attendees and safe transport from the site
- Have a process to keep track of clusters of ILI and report to public health officials at events with a longer duration, (i.e. a few days or more)
- Provide hand wash stations throughout the event venue and ensure a constant supply of soap and paper towels. Hang posters showing correct hand cleaning procedure
- Provide alcohol based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) stations to supplement hand washing stations. Display posters showing correct hand cleaning procedures;
- Ensure that tissues and closed waste receptacles are located throughout the venue and that posters promoting hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette are visible
- Ensure frequent emptying of waste receptacles – no special waste handling is required for influenza.
- Ensure frequent cleaning (at least twice daily) of high-touch areas with household or commercial cleaning products (i.e. washroom facilities, handrails, telephones, door knobs etc.);
- Face masks are discouraged. Masks can lead to unnecessary fear and wearing one requires training to use it properly. *Improper mask use can increase the risk for transmission*
- Shared equipment (i.e. sports) should be cleaned between different users and before storage
- Promote social distancing especially when high levels of H1N1 in the community. this can include measures such as:
  1. Maintaining 2 meters distance whenever possible,
  2. Discourage sharing of personal items (i.e. drinking bottles, eating utensils etc.),
  3. Promote alternatives ways of greetings that do not include physical contact – cheer, head nod, etc. Avoid handshaking, high fives, etc.

**If concerns/questions, contact your local Public Health Office or HealthLine**

**at 1-877-800-0002 for advice or visit [www.healthlineonline.ca](http://www.healthlineonline.ca)**