

Industry Advisory

CIP: A/H1N1 Influenza Outbreak

Initial Distribution: April 29, 2009

The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised the level of influenza pandemic alert to phase 5: “human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region.”

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Status:

Information Only: No Reporting Required



Public: No Handling Restrictions

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Instructions:

NERC Advisories are not the same as a reliability standard, and your organization will not be subject to penalties for a failure to address this Advisory. Additionally, issuance of this Advisory does not lower or otherwise alter the requirements of any approved Reliability Standard, or excuse the prior failure to follow the practices discussed in the Advisory if such failure constitutes a violation of a Reliability Standard. NERC Advisories are designed to improve reliability by disseminating critical reliability information and are made available pursuant to Rule 810 of NERC's Rules of Procedure, for such use as your organization deems appropriate. **No particular response is necessary.**

Distribution:

Primary Distribution: Primary Compliance Contacts
All Registered Entities

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Primary Interest Groups:

Management, Critical Facilities, IT Resources

Advisory:

In consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, the ES-ISAC advises all Registered Entities to review their organization's pandemic plans and take appropriate actions to mitigate influenza infections.

As a precaution and to aid in the mitigation of future infections, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- Consider curtailing all non-essential gatherings in affected communities.
- Consider postponing non-essential travel to countries, regions and communities where confirmed cases exist.

Advisory:
(continued)

- Raise employee awareness via educational material and encourage in-office self-cleaning of work areas with an anti-viral cleaner (i.e. 5% bleach solution), especially during shift turnover
- Encourage symptomatic employees (fever, aches, sweating) to return home and consult their physician if suffering from an influenza-like illness
- Review critical personnel / functions to prepare for possible workforce reduction if the outbreak continues to progress
- Reaffirm external IT needs in accordance with possible reduction of workforce and to accommodate employees who will be able to work from home.

Actions people can take to stay healthy include:

- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Discard tissue after use.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand-cleaner is also effective.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth to avoid spread of germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you have flu-like symptoms, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

The ES-ISAC estimates that the risk to bulk power system reliability from this outbreak is currently LOW due to the limited impact on communities. The situation is still developing, however, and this estimate is subject to change. It is important to note that this outbreak is very difficult to predict.

Background:

The Director-General of the WHO has raised the level of influenza pandemic alert to phase 5 on Wednesday, April 29. Phase 5 is characterized by the WHO as follows:

***Phase 5** is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.*

Experts are advising that, with the widespread presence of the virus, containment of the outbreak is not feasible. The current focus should be on mitigation measures.

More information on WHO phases is available at:

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html

Background:
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Pandemics have the potential to affect infrastructure as the potential for workforce reduction increases.

Additional reference information on the A/H1N1 outbreak is available at:

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine_200904-eng.php

U.S. Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

U.S. Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4488.html

U.S. Strategy for Pandemic Flu:

http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/editorial_0760.shtm

U.S. Critical Infrastructure Guide:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/CIKRpandemicInfluenzaGuide.pdf>

NERC pandemic planning documents are available at:

<http://www.nerc.com/docs/cip/Influenza%20Pandemic%20Reference%20Guide.pdf>

<http://www.nerc.com/docs/cip/Influenza%20Pandemic%20Summary.pdf>

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