



Homeland Security

April 30, 2009

TO: All DHS employees
FROM: Elaine Duke, Under Secretary for Management

RE: Interim Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Because many of our employees work in the field where they may come in contact with people who have contracted the 2009 H1N1 flu virus, this guidance is being released as an interim measure until the Office of Personnel Management provides comprehensive guidance for all federal employees.

This guidance is based on DHS' work with the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This guidance will be augmented as necessary and we will continue to keep employees apprised of any new guidance that may be issued.

For all employees, taking protective measures is critically important, no matter what tasks they are performing.

All employees should:

- Wash hands frequently with soap or sanitizing solutions
- Cover their mouths when they cough
- Stay home from work if feeling ill

In addition, the following employees **MUST** wear Personal Protective Equipment.

- Employees who work closely with (either in contact with or within 6 feet of) people specifically known or suspected to be infected with the H1N1 virus must wear respiratory protection.
 - For example: CBP, TSA, and ICE employees who are in close proximity to a person who is being held in isolation due to flu-like symptoms must wear a mask.

A mask with an N95 or higher-rated filter is required for these situations.

Employees who have underlying conditions – such as pregnancy, asthma, or cardiac or kidney disease – and cannot wear a mask should consult with their component Safety and Health Officers and Supervisors for alternative risk reduction measures.

Employees may request further information and guidance from DHS Office of Health Affairs and DHS Office of Safety and Environmental Programs.

Further information and protective measures on H1N1 flu can be found at www.cdc.gov.