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4. Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health and Safety Measures

During an influenza pandemic, infection prevention and control and occupational health and safety measures can help protect the public, patients, and health care providers from exposure to the influenza virus. It is critical that everyone be aware of the type of measures they should take to reduce the spread of influenza.

4.1 Objectives

1. To ensure health workers have access to appropriate training, infection prevention and control practices, personal protective equipment and other supports to reduce exposure to influenza in the workplace
2. To provide information on infection prevention and control practices to reduce spread of influenza in health care settings

4.2 Infection Prevention and Control Practices in Health Care Settings

Employers of health care workers are responsible for:

- Recognizing hazards, assessing risks associated with hazards, controlling risks and evaluating controls
- Developing measures, procedures and training to protect the health and safety of health workers in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
- Review and revise measures and procedures in light of current knowledge and practice in consultation with the JHSC or HSR
- Report injuries and workplace acquired infections to the Ministry of Labour (MOL), JHSC or HSR and union in accordance with the Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations
- Take every precaution reasonable for the protection of health workers
- Participate in the internal responsibility system (IRS) (The concept of IRS is based on the principle that workplace parties themselves are in the best position to identify OHS problems and to develop and implement solutions)

Risk management for health sector employers is required to ensure that health sector employers and supervisors meet their responsibilities. Health sector employers benefit from the use of the RACE approach to risk management:

- R: recognize the hazard;
 - Obtain information about the hazard

- Conduct surveillance (clients and staff)
- A: assess the risk associated with the hazard;
 - Consider likelihood and consequence of transmission
 - Assess control measures
 - Work with JHSC or HSR
- C: control the risks associated with the hazard; and
 - Determine appropriate control measure
 - Implement appropriate precautions based on assessment of risk
 - Consider hierarchy of controls
 - control at the source (elimination, substitution and engineering controls: negative pressure rooms, facility and room design, room airflow, human traffic patterns, positioning of hand sanitizer dispensers, dedicated hand washing sinks, etc.)
 - control along the path (administrative controls: source control, health worker accommodation, immunization promotion, hand hygiene promotion, environmental cleaning, outbreak management, visitor policies, training and education, OHS and IPAC principles and procedures, guidance on conducting point of care risk assessment, application of the hierarchy of controls to reduce influenza spread, and the correct handling of PPE)
 - control at the health care worker (personal protective equipment: access to equipment, knowledge and skills, training and use, etc. (refer to PIDAC documents))
- E: evaluate the controls
 - Assess compliance
 - Conducting N95 fit-testing and hand hygiene audits
 - Ensuring high immunization uptake
 - Conducting debriefing at the conclusion