

POLICY: Employees with Symptoms or Exposure to the Flu

ADOPTION/LAST REVISION : 10-13-09

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Library Director and Section Heads

Special Notes: This policy/procedure manual does not in any way constitute an employment contract and the Marshfield Public Library reserves the right to amend this manual at any time subject only to approval by the Marshfield Public Library Board of Trustees.

PURPOSE:

Employees have an important role in protecting themselves, their families and their coworkers from the spread of Influenza (flu). The spread of the flu has the possibility to reach epidemic or pandemic proportions which can result in associated extended time off, hospitalizations and possible deaths. In order to preserve the health of our employees, the Library has adopted this policy which is intended to help minimize the spread of the flu.

The following guidelines will help prevent or slow the spread of the flu:

- Stay informed. Health officials will provide additional information as it becomes available.
- Employees should take these everyday steps to protect your health and lessen the spread of this new virus:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and will be available in your department.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people, preferably 6 feet or more.
 - If you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.) If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. In general, you should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness, especially people at increased risk of severe illness from influenza. With seasonal flu, people may be contagious from one day before they develop

- symptoms up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

The Marshfield Public Library will take appropriate measures to limit or slow any further spread of this disease in our workplace, schools, and community. People with the flu virus are contagious while they have symptoms; therefore it is important that employees with symptoms consistent with the flu minimize their exposure to others. This policy addresses employment considerations in relationship to the exclusion of City employees from employment based on possible infection with the flu.

FLU SYMPTOMS

People who are sick with an influenza-like illness (ILI) (fever plus at least cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea) should stay home and minimize contact with others, including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (This is defined as having your fever gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.) .

SICKNESS RELATED ABSENCE

The Marshfield Public Library will take appropriate action to prevent, suppress, and control the flu and other communicable diseases. In order to maintain a safe work environment, the Marshfield Public Library may advise certain employees to stay home from employment if they are experiencing symptoms similar to the flu.

LEAVE BENEFITS AND PAYROLL CONSIDERATIONS

Employees who stay home from employment with influenza-like illness will be eligible for applicable paid sick leave benefits.

- Employees with insufficient sick leave hours accrued will be allowed to use other accrued leave. If all other leave is exhausted, the employee will be allowed to take unpaid leave during the period. Employees will be expected to return to work only when employee has **been free of fever (without using fever-reducing medicine) for at least 24 hours**. At the Library's discretion, a doctor's return to work note may not be required for influenza-like illness lasting more than three days.

Employees requesting additional time off once this period ends must follow regular time off request procedures.

WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY EMPLOYER/SUPERVISOR?

- If you have a fever AND one of the other symptoms listed on the Influenza-like Illness Symptom Screening Tool Form, tell them you are at home with an influenza-like illness.
- If you have been diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a different illness, such as strep, tell your supervisor.

Guidelines for Supervisors
Influenza-like Illness Symptom Screening Tool

The symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, and sometimes body aches, headache, chills and feeling tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. Use the following check list to help determine if the employee may have the flu:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have a fever of 100 degrees or higher? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have a cough? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have a sore throat? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have a headache, body aches or chills? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you have vomiting or diarrhea? |

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT TO ADVISE AN EMPLOYEE TO STAY HOME FROM WORK

- If employee answered yes to a fever of 100 degrees or higher **and** one or more of the other symptoms, they may have an influenza-like illness. **Advise employee to stay home at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (Employee’s fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.). Even though the employee is feeling better they still can pass the virus to other people.**
- If employee answered “yes” to only one of the questions above, or they are ill with other symptoms, advise them to stay home at least one day to observe for other symptoms. If other symptoms develop, use the check list questions again to decide whether to continue to stay home. Return to work only when employee has **been free of fever (without using fever-reducing medicine) for at least 24 hours.**

WHAT IF I HAVE A NOTE FROM THE DOCTOR?

- If employee exhibits Influenza-like symptoms -- defined as fever 100 degrees or more and cough and/or sore throat -- the Marshfield Public Library advises the employee to stay home from work (and all public settings) for a **minimum of 24 hours after their fever is gone (without using fever-reducing medicine), or longer if the symptoms persist.** A release from a doctor saying employee can return to work sooner will be accepted.

Flu FAQ Sheet

1. How do I know if an employee should be encouraged to stay home from employment?

An employee should be advised to stay home from the workplace if he/she meets any one of the following:

- is currently experiencing symptoms consistent with the flu
- is diagnosed by a healthcare provider as having the flu

2. What if the employee calls-in sick, or voluntarily goes home because he/she suspects the flu?

The employee can go/stay home if he/she has the symptoms. The employee may request sick or other paid leave and should follow all leave rules and policies.

3. What if an employee calls-in sick, or voluntarily goes home, and claims the illness is something other than the flu (i.e. back spasms, migraines, asthma attack, etc.)?

Do not assume that every employee who calls-in as ill has symptoms of the flu. If, when he/she reports back to work, he/she displays symptoms consistent with the flu, the employee should be encouraged to stay home. All Library policies and procedures regarding requesting and receiving approval for sick leave will apply. Most call-in policies require that the employee speak directly with the supervisor or designated person and provide a general description of their illness.

4. What do I do when an employee says that someone in their family, or living in their household, has the flu?

Advise the employee to watch himself/herself for signs of the flu and to stay home if a fever and other symptoms develop. Also encourage the employee to be vaccinated against both seasonal and other types of influenza.

5. What do I tell other employees when someone is out on sick leave?

Supervisors should never discuss an employee's health with any other employee. If other employees ask, you should simply state "Just as I don't discuss your health status with other employees, I am not going to discuss his/hers with you. The employee (name) is out on leave." If employees are expressing concern about their own health safety you should tell them that the Library is following CDC and public health protocols and taking appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all employees.

6. When should an employee return to work?

The employee is expected to return to work immediately once one of the below

criteria has been met. If he/she chooses to remain at home because still not feeling well, all regular City sick leave policies and procedures should be followed.

- At least 24 hours after their fever is gone OR a public health approved test for the flu demonstrates a negative result.

7. Is this a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)?

No. HIPAA provides protection of personal health information. It does not prohibit an employee from providing information to his/her employer. It is the healthcare provider's responsibility to obtain consent from the employee prior to releasing any protected health information.

8. How will the employee who is ill be compensated?

Most employees who are excluded from employment under this policy can use sick or other accrued leave for all time away from work. Employees may request an unpaid leave of absence. Library policies regarding pro-rated benefit accruals/contributions may apply for employees on unpaid leave of absences. If the employee fails to return to work after the illness, he/she must request the additional time off in accordance with the Library's leave rules and policies.

9. What if the employee does not have any/enough sick leave accrued?

Employees who are eligible for sick leave benefits (including newly hired employees in their initial probationary period), will be allowed to use any other benefit time the employee currently has. If all other leave is exhausted the employee will be allowed to take unpaid leave during the period.

10. Can a healthy employee refuse to come to work, or perform job duties because of a belief that by doing so, he or she would be at an increased risk of catching the flu?

No. If the employee refuses, he/she may face disciplinary action as a result of refusing to work. Each situation should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Human Resources.

11. Can an employee who is exposed to, or diagnosed with the flu file a Worker's Compensation Claim?

Because the flu is prevalent in the community it may be difficult to determine if exposure happened at work. However, if an employee becomes ill because of a direct workplace exposure, he/she may be entitled to injury pay under worker's compensation. The supervisor should report the claim, and all other worker's compensation protocols should be followed.

12. What if the employee requests to work from home during the period of exclusion?

For many jobs, this is not possible. For some jobs, especially in management, there are things that the employee can accomplish from home. The Library Director or designee must determine what is appropriate for each individual situation.

13. What if an employee exhibiting influenza-like symptoms chooses to work even after being encouraged to stay at home?

By law that employee may not be compelled to stay at home. However, the employee may be assigned duties which isolate that employee from other staff members and the public. In addition, other staff members may at their request choose to wear a face mask if they work in proximity with an employee working with influenza-like symptoms.

14. Can an employee receive FMLA leave because of the flu?

FMLA is not necessarily applicable because of closing of schools or businesses. FMLA may be concurrently approved or designated in accordance with State and Federal laws and City of Marshfield's FMLA policy, which the Library has adopted. The employee is required to provide the appropriate medical certification to document the serious health condition of him/herself or a qualifying family member, and must give appropriate notice according to the laws and policy. For FMLA questions call the Library Director at 715-389-2745 or Marshfield's Human Resources at 715-486-2004.

15. Will my healthcare plan cover medical expenses associated with treatment for influenza?

Yes, you will have the same coverage that is currently available for any emergency or non-emergency illness.

16. What assistance is available to me to help me cope with the emotional impact of an influenza outbreak?

The City of Marshfield and the Marshfield Public Library provide resources to help employees and eligible dependents cope with these and other types of life events through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP).