



Briefing Note

Time: 1742A
Date : 06 May 2009
Issue No: 02060509

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA ADVICE – UK BASED INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

References:

- A. Trango Travel Advisory 01250409 (Mexico - New Flu Virus)
- B. Trango Travel Advisory 01260409 (Potential Influenza Pandemic)
- B. Trango Travel Advisory 02280409 (WHO Pandemic Alert Phase 4)
- C. Trango Travel Advisory 01300509 (WHO Pandemic Alert Phase 5)

Introduction

Initial advice regarding A/H1N1 Influenza initially known as 'Swine Flu' was provided to Travellers at the References. The situation globally is currently being monitored by Trango Operations and further advice will be provided as appropriate. The aim of this Briefing Note is to provide guidance for companies and organisations that work internationally and / or have Offices / Sites overseas; especially those in the developing world where the standards of medical care, resources and pandemic preparedness might not be as resilient.

Current Situation

Early indications are that since A/H1N1 has spread outside Mexico, this new strain is moderately mild with low mortality rates. Despite this, Organisations should not be complacent. History indicates that we should expect a second more virulent wave in approximately 6 months time. In addition, the 'Avian Flu' threat (H5N1) remains very real and consensus remains that this is potentially very serious with much higher mortality rates. There is an opportunity to use lessons from this current outbreak to prepare for a second wave of A/H1N1 and in case of an Avian Flu (H5N1) outbreak.

Guidance

The guidance below is not exhaustive and it is important that Organisations continually monitor the situation and implement advice issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO), national and host governments.



How to mitigate the risk to business travellers?

Before:

Know the symptoms of swine flu; the symptoms of swine influenza in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza infection and include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat. Some people with swine flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea.

Before travelling consult WHO and relevant government advice on affected countries. Where governments advise against travel to a country, confirmation should be made that the travel insurance policy remains valid.

Ensure that all personal and next of kin details are fully up to date and logged with the appropriate department and / or your safe travel management system (TSTS).

If you feel unwell, don't travel until your illness has been correctly diagnosed and a doctor has agreed you to travel.

When Travelling:

The company should have a dedicated traveller helpline allocated. This should be available 24/7/365. This call taker/s should have access to a health advisor or similar point of contact. This helpline should also have access to interpretation services.

The traveller should be issued with a medical kit containing anti bacterial gel and prescription medication as appropriate including Tamiflu if available. Be sure to check with all destination countries that any drugs carried are not illegal in that country.

General infection control practices, good respiratory and hand hygiene can help to reduce transmission of all viruses, including swine flu. This includes:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles / telephones / computers etc) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Making sure your children follow this advice.

Also, whilst travelling:

- Identify the health care resources in the area you are visiting and ensure that viable medical treatment plans are in place.

- Remember that you are ultimately responsible for your own safety, remain vigilant at all times. If in doubt seek advice early.
- Avoid areas where people may congregate in large numbers and the risk of the spread of the virus would be increased due to the large number of people in the area.
- Be prepared to have to extend your stay in the unlikely case of border closures and / or you become unwell and are quarantined.
- Register travel on TSTS and make regular safety check calls to Trango Operations.
- Consider the use of live GPRS/satellite tracking with a panic alarm monitored by Trango Operations in high risk or remote areas. This can be used to keep travellers safe and away from known infected areas and after travel to determine possible exposure to risk.

It is very easy when focussing on one topical issue to become less aware of other issues when travelling. Remember to consider and be alert to other risks such as security and general travel safety.

What measures companies may wish to put in place to protect employees from risk?

Companies should:

- Appoint a Pandemic Co-ordinator at all locations and develop a network to share information.
- Make sure all employee next of kin and other personal details are fully to date a reviewed regularly.
- Develop a pandemic sick leave policy. Establish a sick leave policy including shift working.
- Plan for staff absences.
- Review Business Continuity, Disaster Recovery and Pandemic Management Plans. Identify critical activities for the company which must continue.
- Ensure triggers for activating plans and responsibilities for taking actions are clear.
- Review the Company Travel Policy. Establish a policy on staff travel, especially to affected areas.
- Monitor the global situation constantly. Update risk assessments and include advice to travellers as a Company Notification.
- Implement travel tracking for personnel and prepare to implement quarantining procedures for returning travellers.
- All journeys should be approved by a Manager of appropriate seniority and a record of this approval should be kept.
- Before approving a journey a manager should consider; is this journey essential or can the meetings be conducted in another manor or be postponed? Has the exposure to risk been properly considered?
- Before travelling the relevant employee should receive a travel briefing and have conducted a risk assessment of the area to be visited.
- Review the home working policy and review the organisations communications and IT infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Keep abreast of current government information.

- Establish an emergency communications plan. Provide a system for warning and informing all employees both in and out of hours. Prepare to divert telephone numbers to alternate sites / locations including home offices.
- Consider distancing strategies such as suspending social gatherings, closing schools / Foundations, non essential meetings and managing areas such as the canteen.
- Exercise and test all plans.
- Ensure sub contractors have appropriate business continuity plans in place.
- Consider minimising visits and other comings and goings from the company.
- Introduce strict hygiene measures in and around the work place.
- Keep all of the staff informed and abreast of current information.
- Liaise with the local authority for locally relevant planning advice.
- Consider issues and actions associated with Site / Office closure.
- Consider Community impacts and response including the logistics chain and impact on utilities.

Where to go for the most accurate information?

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx

www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience.aspx

www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/swine-flu

www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html

www.trangoltd.com/Home

Swine Flu information line +44 (0)800 1 513513

NHS Direct +44 (0)845 4647

Trango Operations +44 (0)1243 608550

What to do if a business traveller is suspected of having H1N1?

If you are back in the UK:

- Stay at home.
- Check symptoms at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx> or Call Swine Flu information line on 0800 1 513513.
- If still concerned call your GP or NHS direct 0845 4647.
- Do not go to your GP or Hospital. Ask a friend to go for you (NHS 'Flu Friend').
- Do not go to work.

If still abroad:

- Remain in your accommodation.
- If you have internet or telephone access, confirm your symptoms using the links or phone numbers above.
- Once you have confirmed your symptoms, seek advice before travelling.
- Inform any local contacts you may know.



- Inform your employers who will in turn consult your company health and / or medical insurance providers.
- Inform the local British Embassy or Consulate.
- Contact Trango for support.

For further advice and support:

Please contact Trango (24 hours) T: +44 1243 608550, Email: info@trangoltd.com