Exposure Control Plan For Serious Infectious Illnesses



1. **PURPOSE**

ABC Company has a duty to protect its workers from exposure to infectious viruses and illnesses that they may contract while performing their work duties. [*Revise the rest of the language in this para., which pertains to avian influenza, for a specific illness or remove the language altogether to leave the Program neutral rather than disease-specific*] These viruses affect poultry but, in some cases, can also be transmitted to humans. Workers at risk include those who work around sick birds, those who clean areas that have contained sick birds and those who handle sick or dead birds (e.g., transport and disposal of carcasses).

We know that a combination of control measures is required to achieve this objective. We commit to being diligent in our efforts to select the most effective control technologies available and to ensure that best practices, as described in this exposure control plan (ECP), are followed in our workplace. The requirements outlined in this ECP will be used along with our standard biosecurity procedures.

2. **EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Identify and assess work processes that could lead to worker exposure to [specify infectious illness or leave generic].

- Ensure that the materials and other resources required to implement and maintain this ECP are readily available where and when they are required—for example, materials such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and resources such as worker training.
- Recommend and provide access to seasonal flu vaccinations. Vaccinations will be provided at no cost to workers.
- Contact Public Health regarding the availability and proper use of antiviral drugs.
- Conduct a periodic review (at least annually) of the effectiveness of the ECP. Include the JHSC (or worker health and safety representative, if applicable) in the process, which should include a review of available control technologies to ensure they are selected and used when practical.
- Ensure that all necessary equipment and PPE are used as required by the ECP.
- Ensure that supervisors and workers are educated and trained to an acceptable level of competency.
- Maintain records of training, fit-test results, crew talks and inspections (e.g., for equipment, PPE and work methods or practices).
- Investigate all exposure incidents, including near misses.
- Coordinate work with other employers to ensure a safe work environment, including the following: – Inform all subcontractors of specific hazards on the worksites. – Ensure that subcontractors have appropriate ECPs and safe work procedures.

3. **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure that workers have received adequate instruction on the hazards associated with exposure to [specify infectious illness or leave generic].
- Select and implement appropriate control measures,

including PPE. · Ensure that workers using respirators have been properly fit tested and that the results are recorded.

- Ensure that workers don and doff their PPE properly and follow decontamination procedures.
- Direct work in a manner that minimizes and controls the risks to workers.
- Liaise with other employers to ensure a safe work environment.
- Ensure that subcontractors are following proper safe work procedures.

4. **WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Attend educational sessions provided by ABC Company.
- Use assigned PPE in an effective and safe manner.
- Follow Public Health recommendations regarding a seasonal flu vaccination and the use of antiviral drugs.
- Follow established work and decontamination procedures as directed by your supervisor.
- Report unsafe conditions and acts to your supervisor.
- Make sure you know how to report exposure incidents.
- Report any flu-like symptoms immediately.

5. **WHAT IS XYZ INFECTIOUS ILLNESS?** [*Revise Sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which pertain to avian influenza, for a specific illness or remove the Sections altogether to leave the Program neutral rather than disease-specific*]

Avian flu (or “bird flu”) is a contagious disease that is caused by several strains of viruses. It can infect all species of birds, including wild birds (particularly waterfowl), pets and domestic birds, such as chickens and turkeys. Avian flu viruses normally don’t infect mammals; however, in some circumstances, humans and other species, such as pigs and cats, can be infected. In the rare cases of human infection, the virus comes from infected birds. Human-to-human transmission of avian flu is not common.

6. **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

Workers can be infected if they live or work close to domestic birds or handle their manure and litter. The most likely way to be infected is through droplets (e.g., from choking or sneezing birds) that come into direct contact with a worker's eyes, nose or mouth. Workers can also be infected if they inhale contaminated dust. Avian flu viruses can also be transmitted indirectly by touching a contaminated object (e.g., equipment in a barn, manure, a door knob or a telephone) and then touching the eyes, nose or mouth. This type of transmission is important to consider because these viruses are known to survive for 12 to 48 hours on surfaces and even days within manure and dust.

7. **HEALTH EFFECTS**

Avian flu viruses that infect humans can cause illnesses that range from mild to severe. These infections are likely to be different from seasonal flu because infected people will not have been exposed previously to the avian flu virus. Symptoms in some cases can include headache, fever, cough, fatigue, sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, itchy inflamed eyes, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. In other cases, a mild eye infection (conjunctivitis) may be the only indication of the disease. Secondary infections such as pneumonia or other acute respiratory diseases may also develop. Avian flu infections in people are rare. However, if a person is infected with avian flu and seasonal flu at the same time, the avian flu virus could change and become more (or less) infectious than the seasonal flu. This could lead to the spread of a highly infectious illness that is new and for which people have no immunity. It is important for poultry workers to get a yearly seasonal flu shot. Even though the shot is not specific for avian flu, it will still boost the immune system to help fight infection from seasonal flu.

8. **EXPOSURE LIMITS**

There are no exposure limits for avian flu viruses. The purpose of this ECP is to ensure that exposure to these viruses is kept as low as reasonably achievable.

9. **OCCUPATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

Workers are at risk of exposure to avian flu if they come into contact with infected birds, birds that have died from avian flu, or potentially contaminated dust, litter, and manure. Workers must learn to recognize the symptoms of avian flu so they can take proper precautions to protect themselves. Birds affected by avian flu can show a variety of symptoms, including the following:

- Sudden death and high mortality
- Decreased food consumption
- Huddling, depression, closed eyes
- Respiratory signs (e.g., sneezing)
- Decreased egg production
- Watery, greenish diarrhea
- Excessive thirst
- Swollen wattles and combs

The presence of many sick and dying birds must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and [insert appropriate agency such as WorkSafeBC]. Workers must follow the procedures outlined in this ECP when handling these birds.

Workers are at risk of infection when performing the following activities:

- Working in a barn containing infected or potentially infected birds (e.g., feeding birds or changing bedding)
- Handling infected or potentially infected birds
- Handling bird carcasses (e.g., disposal)
- Transporting bird carcasses (e.g., by truck or another vehicle)
- Removing contaminated debris, litter and manure
- Cleaning and disinfecting tools and equipment

- Wet cleaning and disinfecting hard surfaces and structures (e.g., cleaning a barn after infected birds have been removed)
- Working in areas classified by the CFIA as “restricted” or “infected.”

10. **EXPOSURE CONTROLS**

The OHS regulations require employers to select controls in the following order of preference:

1. Engineering controls (e.g., physically isolate suspected or infected sources of infection)

2. Administrative controls (e.g., put up signs and barriers to keep unprotected workers away from potentially hazardous areas)
3. PPE (e.g., use disposable coveralls, respirators, gloves, rubber boots, and goggles). PPE minimizes the risk of infection. All workers entering an area where there is a risk of exposure must wear PPE, including a respirator.
4. Respirators

   - Ensure that workers inspect their respirators before work begins.
   - Workers must be fit tested if a respirator is required.
   - Workers must be clean shaven where the respirator seals with the face.
   - When a worker notices a resistance to breathing, the respirator filters must be replaced.
   - Respirators must be used, cleaned and stored as specified in the respirator program.

5. Safe work planning

   - Review safety data sheets (SDSs) for any hazardous chemicals used (particularly products containing formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, or other carcinogens or sensitizers). Follow all recommendations regarding PPE.

- Emergency washing facilities (e.g., a portable eyewash unit) must be available when workers are mixing and applying chemicals.
- Inspect all equipment and tools to make sure they are in good working order.
- Use and maintain all tools and equipment as specified by the manufacturer. Decontamination and disposal of PPE
- Train workers in proper techniques for putting on (donning) and removing (doffing) and disposing of PPE.
- Discard disposable PPE in properly sealed plastic bags.
- Discard single-use N95 respirators after each use.
- Clean and disinfect reusable or non-disposable PPE using a solution of soap and water that contains 10% commercial bleach, or as required by the PPE manufacturer.
- Store elastomeric respirators in plastic bags. Hand washing Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. It helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other surfaces or to other parts of the body (particularly the eyes, nose and mouth).

*Workers should wash their hands immediately in the following situations:

- Before leaving a work area
- After handling infected materials that may be contaminated
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, or applying makeup
- After removing PPE

*Hand washing procedure: Use non-abrasive soap and warm running water. It doesn’t have to be hot to do the job. If water is unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub that contains at least 70% alcohol. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for using the cleanser. As soon as possible, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water in a proper

facility.

Worker training

- Training will be performed by the employer or the employer’s designate.
- Maintain records of attendance, dates of training, and training material.
- Ensure that additional training or reference material on exposure is available to employees upon request.

Training topics

- Biosecurity protocols
- The risk of exposure to and signs and symptoms of the disease
- Need for seasonal flu vaccination and antiviral drugs
- Safe work procedures, including handling potentially infected materials
- Proper use of PPE
- Proper use of respirators and the respirator program
- Proper donning and doffing of PPE, as well as hand washing
- Location of washing facilities
- Awareness of Public Health monitoring processes, if exposed, and the requirement to report exposures
- The details of the ECP Health surveillance. self-monitoring and what to do if symptoms develop. In some circumstances, active surveillance (Public Health contacting the worker on a regular basis) may be required, in addition to recommendations on the use of antiviral drugs. Workers who become ill should seek medical care. Before arriving, workers should notify their health care provider that they may have been exposed. Sick workers should also immediately notify Public Health and their JHSC (or workplace health and safety representative, if applicable). Except for visiting a health care provider, infected workers should

stay home and minimize contact with others until advised by Public Health that they can return to work. All suspected cases must be reported to Public Health. Annual review This ECP will be reviewed at least annually and updated as necessary by the employer in consultation with the JHSC or worker health and safety representative.