

Safety Pros Say Flu Shots Should Be Recommended, Not Required



It's all over the news how bad this flu season already is. If influenza were to sweep through your workplace, it could effectively shut down your operations. And getting the flu vaccine is one of the best ways to avoid becoming sick.

So you might be tempted to require all workers to get a flu shot. In fact, BC recently implemented a new rule requiring healthcare workers to get the flu vaccine or wear masks around patients. But is this really the best approach?

We recently asked if you thought workers should be required to get flu shots:

- 71% said workers should be encouraged but not forced to get vaccinated
- 20% said, yes, because the flu can seriously impact all workplaces
- 9% said yes but only workers in the healthcare and related industries.

If your workers haven't been vaccinated yet, there are still steps you can take to keep them and their co-workers from getting sick.

For example, Newfoundland's Chief Medical Officer recommends these general personal hygiene rules to protect workers from catching and spreading the flu:

- Avoid touching your face with your hands especially after coming into contact with public surfaces such as door handles, stair rails, debit machines, etc.
- If you're sick, stay home.
- If you must go out, try to avoid crowded areas or seat yourself away from others to avoid spreading your infection. (And practice proper cough etiquette.)
- Clean frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
- Eat nutritious meals, exercise and get lots of rest'your body needs good nutrition and plenty of rest to help prevent infections.
- Get the flu shot to help reduce the risk of catching influenza. (Consider holding a flu clinic in the workplace to make it easy for workers to get vaccinated.)

The OHS Insider's Pandemic & Flu Planning Compliance Centre has lots of

information on your duty under the OHS laws to protect workers from the flu and tools to help you do so, including this infographic you can hang in your workplace to educate workers on the flu and flu prevention tips.

At SafetyPoster.com, you can buy posters on hand washing featuring the Simpsons and sneezing etiquette.

And go to [Safety Smart](http://SafetySmart.com) for flu facts and a safety talk on the flu. Not a Safety Smart member? Sign up for a free 14-day trial.