

# Spot The Safety Violation: 6 Hygiene Rules to Prevent the Spread of the Flu



Is this sick woman using proper coughing etiquette or could she be infecting her co-workers'



Cold and flu season is almost here. So it's important to take steps *now* to keep your workers healthy'and prevent them from getting their co-workers sick when they're not. Keeping your staff healthy is important because just one sick worker can infect half the workplace.

For example, the influenza virus spreads quickly through droplets in the air, which come from our noses and mouths when we cough or sneeze. By coughing into her hand, the woman in the picture will spread the virus to everything she touches, such as equipment, door knobs, tables, etc. (unless she properly washes her hand right away). Any co-workers who then touch those contaminated objects are at risk of getting sick themselves.

To exercise proper cough etiquette, instruct workers to either cough into the crook of their arm or cover their mouth with a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash their hands immediately.

So what can you do to protect workers from getting the flu and/or passing it on to co-workers'

First, share these six basic hygiene rules with workers:

1. Avoid touching your face with your hands, especially after coming into contact with public surfaces such as door handles, stair rails, ATMs, etc.
2. If you're sick, stay home. (Learn about the impacts of so-called presenteeism.)
3. If you must go out, try to avoid crowded areas or seat yourself away from others to avoid spreading your infection. (And practice proper coughing etiquette.)
4. Clean frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.

5. Eat nutritious meals, exercise and get lots of rest'your body needs good nutrition and plenty of rest to help prevent infections and recover from them.
6. Get the flu shot to help reduce the risk of catching the flu in the first place. (Consider holding a flu clinic in the workplace to make it easy for workers to get vaccinated.)

In addition, go to the OHS Insider's Pandemic & Flu Planning Compliance Centre for more information on an employer's duty under the OHS laws to protect workers from the flu and, tools and resources to help you do so, including:

- Information on work refusals and the flu
- An infographic you can hang in your workplace to educate workers on the flu and flu prevention tips
- How to encourage workers to properly wash their hands.